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VOLUME XX. MDCCCCXIV.

The Bibelot

A Reprint of Poetry and Prose for Book Lovers, chosen in part from scarce editions and sources not generally known . . . .

Printed for Thomas B. Mosher and Publish'd by him at 45 Exchange Street, Portland, Maine

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VOLUME XX

Portland, Maine
THOMAS B. MOSHER
Mdccccxiv

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The Bibelot

THAT there never has been any satisfactory appreciation of Vernon Lee published in England or America argues a singular indifference to the one woman of letters who may claim the distinction of a portrait by Sargent! A life of such continuous intellectual development as a mere list of title-pages reveals is possibly in small need of a journalistic "write-up;" does not, we are assured, require a "Bookman number" after the well known formula practised in behalf of any six or sixty "best sellers" of to-day or yesteryear! And yet this aloofness, shall we say, causes regret that the attention bestowed on authors of far less importance than the author of Belcaro *should not have concerned itself with the literary antecedents and friendships of Violet Paget.*

In the preface to her second book, Belcaro: Being Essays on Sundry Æsthetical Questions *(1881), we are told, or rather A. Mary F. Robinson to whom the book was dedicated is told, that "logically its title means nothing. . . . And yet a meaning its name has: a meaning of association."*

Then follows an exquisitely modulated description of just how "the time, the place, and the lov'd one altogether" was evoked by remembrance of a certain winter afternoon spent on the battlements of the old castle of Belcaro.

Belcaro, *itself, preceded by* Studies of the Eighteenth Century *in Italy (1880), was the forerunner of many nobly conceived and nobly executed works, including one fascinating novel, dealing with artistic London, an exquisitely romantic play, many essays, dialogues and stories, a short biography even, converging at last to a crucial series of "studies of some varieties of recent obscurantism," not easily set aside by those who favor Pragmatism or who would hold to a less consolatory doctrine of the conduct of life. But having put in type* Orpheus and Eurydice *we could not refrain from giving as the one fitting prelude to this essay the* Dedication, *which as addressed to her friend, discussed the Book and its Title in a manner at once* intime *and suffused with the lovely lights and shadows of a vanished day. Having done this, the* Postscript *with its personal note so beautifully developed seemed to us another chapter equally impossible to ignore. As a result we reprint three selections instead of the*

one essay as at first intended. For consider, Belcaro *has long been inaccessible and it would appear as if its author had given tacit assent to a relegation of her work into the "portion of weeds and out-worn faces." What* Belcaro *has meant to us those who have* The Child in the Vatican, Chapelmaster Kreisler, *and* In Umbria *are well aware: to such readers, at least,* Orpheus and Eurydice *will meet with an assured welcome.*

Neither can we refrain from mentioning the latest treatment of this subject of an old bas-relief — The Separation of Orpheus and Eurydice by Hermes *by Mr. J. Maxwell Miller — a group of statuary finely reproduced by Mr. Norman Munder of Baltimore. Speaking for ourselves there are few classical compositions so rarely beautiful as this exquisite presentment of the old Greek myth.*

It is true, there is a still later essay by Vernon Lee in her volume entitled Althea *dealing with the reproduction of Gluck's opera in Rome, which we hope to reprint before* The Bibelot *is brought to an end. But for us the subject was first developed in* Belcaro *since when the personality of its author has flowered in words of perfect speech through the long array of her*

works beginning with an interpretation of Eighteenth Century Italy *down to and including her* Notes on England *but recently printed in Scribner's Magazine.*

Summed up: there is less sawdust and more star-dust in the books of Vernon Lee than in any other contemporaries we have read, Walter Pater, John Addington Symonds, and Arthur Symons alone excepted. If this be called a confession of literary strabismus we must make the best or the worst of it: we can no other! For in the light of what has been given us we encounter a great career which in this woman of modern letters has been greatly and consistently followed to a wide and glorious conclusion.

Vive, valeque!

FOR FEBRUARY:
THREE SELECTIONS
BY VERNON LEE (CONCLUDED).

BELCARO: THREE SELECTIONS

By VERNON LEE.

I. THE BOOK AND ITS TITLE

II. ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

III. POSTSCRIPT OR APOLOGY.

Great as is the art of the artist, the art is more potent still of him who perceives, who connects the single work, the single art, with life, intermeshing it with all life's nerves and arteries.—(Orpheus in Rome.)

VERNON LEE.

I.

THE BOOK AND ITS TITLE.

TO ONE OF MY READERS — THE FIRST AND EARLIEST.

A LITTLE while ago I told you that I wished this collection of studies to be more especially yours: so now I send it you, a bundle of proofs and of MS., to know whether you will have it. I wish I could give you what I have written in the same complete way that a painter would give you one of his sketches; that a singer, singing for you alone, might give you his voice and his art; for a dedication is but a drop of ink on a large white sheet, and conveys but a sorry notion of property. Now, this book is intended to be really yours; yours in the sense that, were it impossible for more than one copy of it to exist, that one copy I should certainly give to you. Because these studies represent the ideas I have so far been able to work out for myself about art, considered not historically, but in its double relation to the artist and the world for whom he works; ideas which it is my highest ambition should influence those young

enough and powerful enough to act upon them; and, this being the case, my first thought is to place them before you: it is, you see, a matter of conversion, and the nearest, most difficult, most desired convert, is yourself.

To you, therefore, before any one else, must I explain what manner of book this is, what are its origin and its aims. And first, the meaning of its title. Logically, this title means nothing; it is a mere negation, a mere arbitrary combination of letters chosen from sheer despair to find any name which should tell, what this title certainly does not, what is the contents of the volume. Yet, a meaning the name has: a meaning of association. For, even as a snatch of melody will sometimes, for no apparent reason, haunt us while we are about any particular work, follow us while we are travelling through a definite tract of country (as, two years since, Wagner's Spinning Chorus travelled with me from Mantua to Verona, and from Verona to Venice) in such a way that the piece of work, the tract of country, bring with their recollection the haunting tune to our mind; so, also, during the time of making up this

volume, I have been haunted by the remembrance of that winter afternoon, when last we were together, on the battlements of of Belcaro. Perhaps (if we must seek a reason), because, while driving to the strange, isolated villa castle, up and down, and round and round the hills of ploughed-up russet earth, and pale pink leafless brushwood, and bright green pine-woods, where every sharp road-turning surprises one with a sudden glimpse of Siena, astride, with towers and walls and cupolas, on her high, solitary ridge; while dashing up the narrow hedged lanes whose sere oak and ilex branches brushed across our faces; or, while looking down from the half-fortified old place on to the endless, vague, undulating Sienese fields and oak-woods; perhaps, because at that moment I may, unconscious to myself, have had a vague first desire to put together more of the helter-skelter contents of the notes over which we had been looking, and give it you in some intelligible shape. Perhaps this may have served to set up the association; or perhaps it was something wholly different, unguessed, trumpery, inscrutable. Be this as it may, the fact remains that dur-

ing the dull months of planning and putting together this book, I have been haunted, as by a melody, by the remembrance, the vision, the consciousness of that afternoon, warm and hazy, of early December, on the battlements of Belcaro castle, when we looked down over the top of the dense mural crown of sprouting pale green acorned ilex on to the hills and ravines, with the sere oak-woods reddened with the faint flush of sunlight, and the vague, white thinned olives and isolated golden-leaved oaks, and distant solitary belfries and castles; away towards Siena, grey on the horizon, beneath the grey, pinked, wet cloud masses, lurid and mysterious like Beccafumi's frescos, as if the clouds, if one looked at them long, might gather into clustered angels with palm-shaped wings and flushed faces and reddened pale locks. Thus have I been haunted by this remembrance, this inner sight, this single moment continuing, in a way, to exist alongside of so many and various other moments; so that, when it has come to giving a name to this book, I find that there is already indissolubly associated with it, the name of Belcaro.

So far of the title: now of the book itself, of what it is, and why it is such. When, two summers since, I wrote the last pages of my first book, it was, in a way, as if I had been working out the plans of another dead individual. The myself who had, almost as a child, been insanely bewitched by the composers and singers, the mask actors and pedants, and fine ladies and fops, the whole ghostly turn-out of the Italian 18th century; who had, for years, in the bustle of self-culture, I might almost say, of childish education, never let slip an opportunity of adding a new miscrospic dab of colour to the beloved, quaint, and ridiculous and pathetic century-portrait which I carried in my mind; this myself, thus smitten with the Italian 18th century, had already ceased to exist. Another myself had come instead, to whom this long accumulated 18th century lore had been bequeathed, but who would never have taken the pains, or had the patience, to collect it; who carried out with a sort of filial piety the long cherished plan of making into a book all that inherited material, seeing the while in this 18th century lore what the original collector had never

guessed: illustrations, partial explanations, of questions of artistic genesis and evolution, of artistic right and wrong, which were for ever being discussed within me. This new myself, this heir to the task of putting into shape the historical materials collected by an extinct individuality, is the myself by whom has been written this present book: this present book represents the thoughts, the problems, the doubts, the solutions, which were haunting me while writing that first book from which this new one so completely differs. To plan, to work for such a book as that first one, seems to me now about the most incomprehensible of all things; to care for one particular historical moment, to study the details of one particular civilisation, to worry about finding out the exact when and how of any definite event; above all, to feel (as I felt) any desire to teach any specified thing to anybody; all this has become unintelligible to my sympathies of to-day. And it is natural: natural in mental growth that we are, to some extent, professorial and professorially self-important and engrossed, before becoming restlessly and sceptically studious: we

may teach some things before we even know the desire of learning others. Thus I, from my small magisterial chair or stool of 18th century-expounder, have descended and humbly gone to school as a student of æsthetics.

To school, where, and with whom? A little to books, and this (excepting a few psychological works not bearing directly upon my subject) with but small profit; mainly to art itself, to pictures and statues and music and poetry, to my own feelings and my own thoughts; studying, in seemingly desultory fashion, in discussions with my friends and with myself. This volume BELCARO is the first fruit of these attempts at knowing: it is not the Sir-Oracle manual of a professor, with all in its right place, understood or misunderstood, truth and error all neatly systematised for the teaching of others; but rather the scholar's copy book, the fragmentary and somewhat helter-skelter notes of what, in his listenings and questionings, he has been able to understand, and which he hands over to his fellow-pupils, who may have understood as much of the lessons as himself, but have in all probability

understood different portions or in different ways. Such a collection of notes this volume most unmetaphorically is: it is literally a selection of such pages out of my commonplace books as seemed (though written at various moments) to converge upon given points of æsthetical discussion; to coalesce, conglomerate naturally, and to admit of some sort of setting, or resetting. I say setting or resetting, because these thoughts, these questionings, these discussions, though in their written shape merely copied out from a confusion of quite heterogeneous notes, have nearly all had, while they were living, while thought or asked or discussed, a real setting of some sort. For the ideas have come mainly in the presence of works of art, or in discussions with friends: they have come, sometimes unperceived at the moment, together with the sight of a picture, the hearing of a bar or two of music, the reading of an accidentally met, familiar quotation; a reason, a long sought explanation has been suddenly struck out by a sentence, a word from a friend. Oh yes, a setting they have had, these ideas, such as they are: a real, living, shimmering setting

of tones and looks, and jests and passion, and anecdote and illustration, and irrelevant streakings and veinings of description and story; a setting too of place and time and personality. For they have come out of real desultory talks: re-echoed by the bare walls of glaring galleries and sounding statue cells; or whispered on the steps before the withdrawn curtain of some altar-piece, while the faint mass bell tinkled from distant chapels, or great waves of litany responses rushed roaring down the nave, and broke in short repeated echoes against the pillars of the aisle; or, never clearly begun or ended, between one piece of music and another, with the hands still on the keys, and the eyes still on the score; talks desultory, digressive, broken off by the withdrawing of the curtain from a fresh picture, by the prelude of another piece, by a cart blocking up the street or a cat in behind a window grating; by something often utterly trumpery, senseless and for the moment all important. And they have come also, the scattered ideas, in long discussions, rambling but eager (their seriousness shivered ever and anon by a sudden grotesque image or cutting answer,

or inane pun, or diverted off, no one knew how, into anecdotes or folk tales), in the fire-lit winter afternoons, with the crackle of wood and the crackling of sparks; or, in the August-heated, shuttered room, with the midday drowsy silence brought home more completely by the never flagging saw of the cicalas on the vine-bearing poplars, by the uniform clatter of the wooden frame crushing the brittle silvery hemp straw in the dark courtyard outside. This manner of setting they have had; and a far finer than any that could artificially be given to them. In order to endure, they had, these ideas, to be removed out of all this living frame-work; to be written down, that is to say, to be made quite lifeless and inorganic, and dry and stiff, like some stuffed animal or bird. And when it came to sorting them, to preparing them to show to other folks; the vague melancholy sense of how different they now looked, my poor art thoughts all dreary in their abstractness, from what they had been when they had first come into my head; this sense of difference made me wish and try to replace them in a setting, an artificial one, which should in a manner be

equivalent to that original real setting of place and moment, and individuality and digression: equivalent as an acre of garden, with artificial rocks, streams, groves, grottoes, places for losing your way, flower-beds, etc., is equivalent for all the country you can travel over in five or six years. I have done as best I could, merely to satisfy my own strong feeling that art questions should always be discussed in the presence of some definite work of art, if art and its productions are not to become mere abstractions, logical counters wherewith to reckon; also, that discussions should be, what real discussions are, a gradual unravelling of tangled questions, either alone or with others' assistance, not a mere exposition of a cut and dry system. I have always, in putting together these notes, had a vision of pictures or statues or places, had a sound of music in my mind, or a page of a book in my memory; I have always thought, in arranging these discussions, of the real individuals with whom I should most willingly have them: I have always felt that some one else was by my side to whom I was showing, explaining, answering; hence, the use of the second

person plural, of which I have vainly tried to be rid: it is not the oracular *we* of the printed book, it is the *we* of myself and those with whom, for whom, I am speaking; it is the constantly felt dualism of myself and my companion.

Thus much of the form into which, as the only one which, however imperfectly, suited my liking, I have worked these notes, taken from out of the confusion of my commonplace books. Now, as to the notes, or rather as to the ideas which they embody. These ideas, I repeat, are not a system; they are mere fragmentary thinkings out of æsthetic questions. Yet, they have, taken altogether, a certain uniformity of tendency, a certain logical shape: they look like a system. But if a logical shape they have, it is not because they have been deliberately fitted into each other, but because they have been homogeneously evolved; if a system they appear, it is because the same individual mind, in its attempt to solve a series of closely allied problems, must solve them in a self-consistent way. Hence, while dreading beyond all things to cramp my still growing, and therefore altering, ideas in the

limits of a system, I find that I have, nevertheless, evolved for myself a series of answers to separate questions, which constitute a sort of art-philosophy. An art-philosophy entirely unabstract, unsystematic, essentially personal, because evolved unconsciously, under the pressure of personal circumstances, and to serve the requirements of personal tendencies. I have, of course, read a good deal about art, perhaps more than other people; and I have consciously and unconsciously assimilated a good deal of the books that I read; but I have never deliberately accepted (except in the domain of art-history and evolution, of which I have not treated in this book which deals only of art in its connection with the individual artist and his public) a whole theory, and set myself either to developing or correcting it: the ideas of others enter largely into the answers to my self-questionings, but they do so because they had become part and parcel of my own thought; and the questions and their answers have always been asked by myself and answered by myself. For, with respect to æsthetic training, I have been circumstanced differently from most writers on the

subject, nay, from most readers of our generation. I was taught as little about art, I heard as little talk about pictures, statues, or music, as any legendary calvinist child of the 17th century; I jostled art of one kind or another as much as any child well can: I was familiar with art, cared about it (to the extent of requiring it) before well knowing that art existed: reversing the training of these days of culture and eclecticism and philosophy, according to which one usually knows all about art, all about its history, ethics, philosophy, schools, epochs, moral value, poetic meaning, and so forth, before one knows art itself, long before one cares a jot for it. To me, art was neither a technical study, nor a philosophic puzzle, nor a rhetorical theme, nor a fashionable craze: it was something natural, familiar; indifferent at first, then enjoyed; only later read and thought about. It was only when I began to read what other people had thought and felt on the subject, that I began to discover (with surprise and awe) that there was something rare, wonderful, exotic, sublime, mysterious, ineffable about art. I read a great many books about all the arts, and

about each art in particular, from Plato to Lessing, from Reynolds to Taine, from Hegel to Ruskin; I read, re-read, annotated, extracted, compared, refuted; I filled copy books with transcendental, romantic, and positivistic æsthetics; I began to feel, to understand art and all its wonderful mysteries; I began to be able to express in words all the vague sublimities which I felt. Any one reading my notes, hearing my conversation, would have sworn that I was destined to become an art philosopher. But it was not to be. Much as I read, copied, annotated, analysed, imitated, I could not really take in any of the things which I read; or if I took them in, they would remain pure literary flourishes. As soon as I got back into the presence of art itself, all my carefully acquired artistic philosophy, mystic, romantic, or transcendental, was forgotten: I looked at pictures and statues, and saw in them mere lines and colours, pleasant or unpleasant; I listened to music, and when, afterwards, I asked myself what strange moods it had awakened in my soul, what wondrous visions it had conjured up in my mind, I discovered that, during that period

of listening, my mind had been a complete blank, and that all I could possibly recollect were notes. My old original prosaic, matter-of-fact feeling about art, as something simple, straightforward, enjoyable, always persisted beneath all the metaphysics and all the lyrism with which I tried to crush it. I continued, indeed, to study art, to think about what it really was; but gradually I perceived that this thinking of mine, instead of developing my faculties for seeing in art all the wonderful things seen in it by others, tended more and more to confirm my original childish impression that art was a simple thing to be simply enjoyed. My thinking was mainly negative: instead of discovering new things in art, I discovered every day the absence in it of some of the strange properties with which I had learned to invest it; I perceived more and more distinctly that half of the ideas of æstheticians had merely served to hide the real nature of the art about which they wrote; I understood that while analysing psychological meanings in pictures, they were shutting their eyes to the form and the colour; that while they were dreaming about woods and lakes, and love

and death, they were not listening to the music. I gradually took in the fact that most writers on art were simply substituting psychological or mystic or poetic enjoyment, due to their own literary activities, for the simple artistic enjoyment which was alone and solely afforded by art itself. I saw that the more value any work of art possessed in itself, and the greater the amount of pleasure which it could afford, the more extraneous and impertinent was the sort of interest with which æstheticians tried to invest it. I became aware that writers, being unable to awaken with their machinery of thoughts and feelings and words the activities awakened by the intrinsic qualities, visible or audible, of statues or pictures or music, had unconsciously substituted an appeal to other mental activities with which the works of art had at best but little connection. This gradual discovery amused me, but it also made me indignant. Had mankind appeared to me to be merely placidly enjoying as artistic effects those which were not artistic effects at all, it would have been a mere matter for amusement; but it seemed to me that as a consequence of this mankind was entirely

missing much of the enjoyment which art could give, and, moreover, which could be given only by art. Besides, art was for ever attempting really to produce those imaginary, imagined effects: sculpture was trying to give psychological amusement, music was trying to play tragedies and paint landscapes, and write religious meditations; and in so doing art was incapacitating itself for its real work, even as mankind was incapacitating itself for appreciating the real powers of art. Hence, in so far as I thought at all about art in its absolute relations to artist and public (as distinguished from art as a psychological, historical, merely scientific study) my thoughts all tended towards getting rid of those foreign, extra-artistic, irrelevant interests which æstheticians have since the beginning of time interposed between art and those who are intended to enjoy it; my work has, unconsciously enough, been to logically justify that perfectly simple, direct connection between art and ourselves, which was the one I had felt, as a child, before learning all the wonderful fantastications of art philosophers. My own art philosophy is therefore simply to try and enjoy in art what

art really contains, to obtain from art all that it can give, by refraining from asking it to give what it cannot. To this end have tended all those most harum-scarum notes, written during the last six years, which I have here collected and tried to group according to the particular art, or the particular portion of an art, to which they referred. Some are about painting, some about music, some about poetry, some about art in general, some inextricably combined and mixed up with other subjects. They have been written at different times, hence with varying amount of experience and information; occasionally they may even be contradictory in a trifle. Thus, when I wrote the notes on musical expression incorporated in the essay called after Hoffmann's Kapell-Meister Kreisler, I was not yet acquainted with the discoveries of Mr. Herbert Spencer on the subject; discoveries which have infinitely cleared my ideas, and which serve to correct, in the adjoining essay called *Cherubino*, much that was vague, and perhaps equivocal, in my earlier notes. Had I been constructing a system, I should have recast all the old (or suppressed all the new); but

I am merely collecting notes, so I have let them stand as they were written. My object is not to teach others, but to show them how far I have taught myself, and how far they may teach themselves. I must always return to my comparison of the copy books of the boy attending a course of lectures: this is not all that I conceive can be said on the subject; it is merely as much as I have been able to understand thereof; and the more I have listened and questioned, the more what I have understood has become connected within itself and seemed to indicate connections with unstudied problems belonging to different orders of thought. Thus, after having thought and written only about art; about what each art can and cannot do, about the relations of the various arts amongst each other and to their artists, I have gradually found myself thinking and writing about what art as a whole can do and should do; about the relations between all art and life taken as a whole: after the purely æsthetical questions has come the question, no æsthetical question this time — what value, in this world of good and evil, of doubt and certainty, of action and inaction,

in this world struggling for physical and social and moral good, what value have æsthetical questions at all? And with these notes, written latest of all, and threatening to divert me more than they should from my present field of study to the wider, nobler, far more intricate and dangerous field of ethics, I have thought it best to close my book; since these latest notes supply the explanation — felt all along, but only vaguely formulated till now — of my whole æsthetic, because of my whole philosophic, tendencies: the greatest amount of good work to be obtained from everything, and this possible only by all being seen in its right light, and consequently used in its right place.

This is what my new book is, and this is how such it has come to be. And just because it is what it is, because it is not a mere piece of work, not a mere something made by me and thrust away, in its systematic cut and dryness, from my living personality; but a certain proportion of my growing, altering, enlarging, disjointed, helter-skelter thoughts, of the thoughts which come to me whether I will or not; because it is not a real book but a collection

of notes, do I wish it to be read by you. So now I tie together and make a packet of all the pages of proofs and sheets of MS., and send it all to you. The summer has come round: the tall grass, brocaded like some rough, rich mediæval stuff, with yellow buttercups and blue sage flowers, is already beginning to be scythed and raked away; the last clusters of hawthorn, which, a few days since, still stood out white and crisp against the blue of the sky, fall to pieces as soon as one tries to gather them; the Tuscan country has already got its summer sheen of pale green poppied wheat, and pale green budding vine, and dim blue distance, and pervading faint yellow haze; the hills of Siena are green with sprouting arbutus and ilex and fern and hellebore bells; the oak-woods that we saw russet under the reddening light, are in tender, yellowish new leaf; the olives are in blossom from which we broke the fruit-laden twigs; it seems so long, so very long, since that soft grey winter day when last we were together, looking down from the battlements of the old Sienese villa; and yet the memory of that winter day seems as real as the present reality of

this summer one; and haunts me still, as I write these words, even as it has haunted me throughout the putting together of this book, which I have called, from that haunting remembrance, and, perhaps, a little also that the association might make it more pleasant in your eyes, by the name of that strange, isolated, ilex-circled castle villa of Belcaro. And now, unroll the tight-rolled manuscript and smooth out the rumpled proof sheets; read, and tell me whether or not what you have read is ever to be read by any one else.

FLORENCE, *May*, 1881.

II.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

THE LESSON OF A BAS-RELIEF.

No Greek myth has a greater charm for our mind than that of Orpheus and Eurydice. In the first place, we are told by mythologists that it is a myth of the dawn, one of those melancholy, subdued interpretations of the eternal, hopeless separation of of the beautiful light of dawn and the beautiful light of day, which forms the constantly recurring tragedy of nature, as the tremendous struggle between light and darkness forms her never-ending epic, her Iliad and Nibelungenlied. There is more of the purely artistic element in these myths of the dawn than in the sun myths. Those earliest poets, primitive peoples, were interested spectators of the great battle between day and night. The sun-hero was truly their Achilles, their Siegfried. In fighting, he fought for them. When he chained up the powers of darkness the whole earth was hopeful and triumphant; when he sank down dead, a thousand dark, vague, hideous monsters were let loose on the world, filling men's hearts with sickening terror; the solar warfare was waged for and

against men. The case is quite different with respect to the dawn tragedy. If men were moved by that, it was from pure, disinterested sympathy. The dawn and the day were equally good and equally beautiful; the day loved the dawn, since it pursued her so closely, and the dawn must have loved the day in return, since she fled so slowly and reluctantly. Why, then, were they forbidden ever to meet? What mysterious fate condemned the one to die at the touch of the other — the beloved to elude the lover, the lover to kill the beloved? This sad, sympathising question, which the primitive peoples repeated vaguely and perhaps scarce consciously, day after day, century after century, at length received an answer. One answer, then another, then yet another, as fancy took more definite shapes. Yes, the dawn and the morning are a pair of lovers over whom hangs an irresistible, inscrutable fate — Cephalus and Procris, Alcestis and Admetus, Orpheus and Eurydice.

And this myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is, to our mind, the most charming of the tales born of that beautiful, disinterested

sympathy for the dawn and the morning, the one in which the subdued, mysterious pathos of its origin is most perfectly preserved; in which no fault of infidelity or jealousy, no final remission of doom, breaks the melancholy unity of the story. In it we have the real equivalent of that gentle, melancholy fading away of light into light, of tint into tint. Orpheus loses Eurydice as the day loses the dawn, because he loves her; she has issued from Hades as the dawn has issued from darkness; she melts away beneath her lover's look even as the dawn vanishes beneath the look of the day.

The origin of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is beautiful; the myth itself, as evolved by spontaneous poetry, is still more so, and more beautiful still are the forms which have successively been lent it by the poet, the sculptor, and the musician. Its own charm adds to that of its embodiments, and the charm of its embodiments adds in return to its own; a complete circle of beautiful impressions, whose mysterious, linked power it is impossible to withstand. The first link in the chain are those lines of Virgil's, for which we would willingly give

ten Æneids, those grandly simple lines, half-hidden in the sweet luxuriance of the fourth book of the *Georgics*, as the exquisitely chiselled fragment of some sylvan altar might lie half-hidden among the long grasses and flowers, beneath the flowering bays and dark ilexes, broken shadows of boughs and yellow gleams of sunlight flickering fantastically across the clear and supple forms of the sculptured marble "*And already upwards*
"*returning, he had escaped all mishaps, and*
"*the given-back Eurydice was coming into the*
"*upper air, walking behind him, for Proser-*
"*pina had made this condition. When, of a*
"*sudden, a madness seized on the unwily*
"*lover—pardonable, surely, if ghosts but knew*
"*how to pardon. He stood, and back on his*
"*Eurydice, already in our sunlight, he looked,*
"*forgetful, alas! and broken of will. Then*
"*was all the work undone, broken was the*
"*compact with the unkind lord, and vainly*
"*had he thrice heard the waters of hell*
"*sounding. Then she—'What madness has*
"*ruined me, wretched one, and thee, also,*
"*Orpheus? For I am called by the cruel*
"*Fates to return, and sleep closes my swim-*
"*ming eyes. So, farewell. I am borne away*

"*muffled in thick night, stretching forth to*
"*thee (alas, thine no longer!) my helpless*
"*hands.' She spoke, and from his sight sud-*
"*denly, even as thin smoke mingles with air,*
"*disappeared; nor him, vainly clasping the*
"*shadows, and many things wishing to say,*
"*did she see again.*" These lines suggest a bas-relief to us, because a real bas-relief is really connected with them in our mind, and this connection led to a curious little incident in our æsthetic life, which is worth narrating. The bas-relief in question is a sufficiently obscure piece of Greek workmanship, one of those mediocre, much-degraded works of art with which Roman galleries abound, and among which, though left unnoticed by the crowd that gathers round the Apollo, or the Augustus, or the Discobolus, we may sometimes divine a repetition of some great lost work of antiquity, some feeble reflection of lost perfection. It is let into the wall of a hall of the Villa Albani, where people throng past it in search of the rigid, pseudo-Attic Antinous. And it is as simple as the verses Virgil: merely three figures slightly raised out of the flat, blank back-ground, Eurydice between Orpheus and Hermes. The three

figures stand distinctly apart and in a row. Orpheus touches Eurydice's veil, and her hand rests on his shoulder, while the other hand, drooping supine, is grasped by Hermes. There is no grouping, no embracing, no violence of gesture — nay, scarcely any gesture at all; yet for us there is in it a whole drama, the whole pathos of Virgil's lines. Eurydice has returned, she is standing beneath our sun — *jam luce sub ipsa* — but for the last time. Orpheus lets his lyre sink, his head drooping towards her — *multa volens dicere* — and holds her veil, speechless. Eurydice, her head slightly bent, raises her eyes full upon him. In that look is her last long farewell: —

> Jamque vale, feror ingenti circumdata nocte,
> Invalidas tibi tendens, heu! non tua, palmas.

Behind Eurydice stands Hermes, the sad, though youthful messenger of the dead. He gently takes her hand; it is time; he would fain stay and let the parting be delayed for ever, but he cannot. Come, we must go. Eurydice feels it; she is looking for the last time at Orpheus, her head and step are prepared to turn away — *jamque vale.* Truly this sad, sympathising messenger of Hades

is a beautiful thought, softening the horror of the return to death.

And we look up again at the bas-relief, the whole story of Orpheus laying firmer hold of our imagination; but as our eyes wander wistfully over the marble, they fall, for the first time, upon a scrap of paper pasted at the bottom of it, a wretched, unsightly, scarce legible rag, such as insult some of the antiques in this gallery, and on it is written: — "Antiope coi figli Anfione e Zeto." A sudden, perplexed wonder fills our mind — wonder succeeded by amusement. The bunglers, why, they must have glued the wrong label on the bas-relief. Of course! and we turn out the number of the piece in the catalogue, the solemn, portly catalogue — full of references to Fea, and Visconti, and Winckelmann. Number — yes, here it is, here it is. What, again?

"Antiope urging her sons, Amphion and Zethus, to avenge her by the murder of Dirce."

We put down the catalogue in considerable disgust. What, they don't see that that is Orpheus and Eurydice! They dare, those soulless pedants, to call *that* Antiope

with Amphion and Zethus! Ah! — and with smothered indignation we leave the gallery. Passing through the little ilex copse near the villa, the colossal bust of Winckelmann meets our eyes, the heavy, clear-featured, strong-browed head of him who first revealed the world of ancient art. And such profanation goes on, as it were, under his eyes, in that very Villa Albani which he so loved, where he first grew intimate with the antique! What would he have said to such heartless obtuseness?

We have his great work, the work which no amount of additional learning can ever supersede, because no amount of additional learning will ever enable us to feel antique beauty more keenly and profoundly than he made us feel it — we have his great work on our shelf, and as soon as we are back at home, our mind still working on Orpheus and Eurydice, we take it down and search for a reference to our bas-relief. We search all through the index in vain; then turn over the pages where it may possibly be mentioned, again in vain; no Orpheus and Eurydice. Ah! "A bas-relief at the Villa Albani" — let us see what that may be.

"A bas-relief," &c., &c. — horror beyond words! The bas-relief — our bas-relief — deliberately set down as Antiope with Amphion and Zethus — set down as Antiope with Amphion and Zethus, by Winckelmann himself!

Yes, and he gravely states his reasons for so doing. The situation is evidently one of great hesitation; there is reluctance on the one hand, persuasion on the other. Moreover, the female figure is that of a mourner, of a supplicant, draped and half-veiled as it is; the figure with the lyre, in the Thracian or Thessalian costume, must necessarily be Amphion, while the other in the loose tunic of a shepherd, must as evidently be his brother, Zethus; and if we put together these facts, we cannot but conclude that the subject of the bas-relief is, as previously stated, Antiope persuading Amphion and Zethus to avenge her on Dirce.

The argument is a good one, there can be no denying it, although it is very strange that Winckelmann should not have perceived that the bas-relief represented Orpheus and Eurydice. But, after all, we ask ourselves, as the confusion in our minds gradually

clears up: how do we know that this *is* Orpheus and Eurydice, and not Antiope and her sons? How! and the answer rises up indignantly, Because we see to the contrary; because we know that it must be Orpheus and Eurydice; because we feel morally persuaded that it is. But a doubt creeps up. We are morally convinced, but whence this conviction? Did we come to the bas-relief not knowing what it was, and did we then cry out, overcome by its internal evidence, that it must represent Orpheus and Eurydice? Did we ourselves examine and weigh the evidence as Winckelmann did? And we confess to ourselves that we did none of these things. But how, then, explain this intense conviction, and the emotion awakened in us by the bas-relief? Yet that emotion was genuine; and now we have, little by little, to own that we had read in a book, by M. Charles Blanc, that such and such a bas-relief at the Villa Albani represented Orpheus and Eurydice, and that we had accepted the assertion blindly, unscrutinisingly, and the coming to the bas-relief with that idea, did not dream of examining into its truth. And did we not then let our

mind wander off from the bas-relief to the story of Orpheus, and make a sort of variation on Virgil's poem, and mistake all this for the impression received from the bas-relief itself? May this not be the explanation of our intense conviction? It seems as if it were so. We have not only lost our sentimental pleasure in the bas-relief, but we have been caught by ourselves (most humiliating of all such positions) weaving fantastic stories out of nothing at all, decrying great critics for want of discernment, when we ourselves had shown none whatever.

It may have been childish, but it was natural to feel considerable bitterness at this discovery; you may smile, but we had lost something precious, the idea that art was beginning to say more to us than to others, the budding satisfaction of being no longer a stranger to the antique, and this loss was truly bitter; nay, in the first bitterness of the discovery, we had almost taken an aversion to the bas-relief, as people will take an aversion to the things about which they know themselves to have been foolish. However, as this feeling subsided, we began to reflect that the really worthy and dignified

course would be to attain to real certainty on the subject, and finding that our recollection of the bas-relief was not so perfectly distinct as to authorise a final decision, we determined coolly to examine the work once more, and to draw our conclusions on the spot.

The following Tuesday, therefore, we started betimes for the Villa Albani, intending to have a good hour to ourselves before the arrival of the usual gaping visitors. The gallery was quite empty; we drew one of the heavy chairs robed in printed leather before the bas-relief, and settled ourselves deliberately to examine it. We were now strangely unbiassed on the subject, for the reaction against our first positive mood, and the frequent turning over one view, then the other, had left in us only a very strong critical curiosity, the desire to unravel the tangled reason of our previous unexplained conviction. Of course we found that our memory had failed in one or two particulars, that the image preserved in our mind was not absolutely faithful, but we could discover nothing capable of materially influencing our views. We looked at the bas-relief again and again;

strictly speaking, there is in it nothing beyond a woman standing between two men, of whom the one touches her veil, and the other, to whom she turns her back, grasps her right hand, while her left hand rests lightly on the shoulder of the first male figure; so far there is reason for saying that the bas-relief represents either Orpheus and Eurydice, or Antiope and her sons; indeed, all that could fairly be said is that it represents a woman between two men, with one of whom she appears to be in more or less tender converse, whereas she is paying no attention to the other, who is taking her passively drooping hand. There is, however, the additional circumstance that one of the men holds a lyre and is dressed in loose trousers and mitre-like head-dress, while the other man wears only a short tunic, leaving the arms and legs bare, and his head is uncovered and shows closely-cut curly locks; the woman being entirely draped, and her head partially covered with a veil. Now, we know that this costume of trousers and mitre-shaped head-gear was that of certain semi-barbarous peoples connected with the Greeks, amongst others the Thracians and

Phrygians, while the simple tunic and the close-cut locks were distinctive of Hellenic youths, especially those admitted to gymnastic training. Moreover, we happen to know that Orpheus was a Thracian, and that Hermes on the other hand, although in one capacity conductor of the souls to Hades, was also the patron divinity of the Greek ephebi of the youths engaged in gymnastic exercises. Now, if we put together these several facts, we perceive great likelihood of these two figures — the one in the dress of a barbarian, which Orpheus is known to have been, and holding a lyre, which Orpheus is known to have played, and the other in the dress of a Greek ephebus, which Hermes is known to have worn — of these two figures really being intended for Orpheus and Hermes. At the same time, we must recollect that Amphion also is known to have worn this barbaric costume and to have played the lyre, while his brother, Zethus, is equally known to have worn the habit of the ephebus; so that Winckelmann has quite as good grounds for his assertion as we have for ours. If only the sculptor had taken the trouble to give the figure in the tunic a pair

of winged sandals or a caduceus, or a winged cap; then there could remain no doubt of his being Hermes, for it is a positive fact that no one except Hermes ever had these attributes; the doubt is owing to the choice of insufficiently definite and distinctive peculiarities. But it now strikes us: all this is founded upon the supposition that we know that the barbarians wore trousers and mitres, that Orpheus was a sort of barbarian, that Greek ephebi wore tunics and short-cut hair, that Hermes was a sort of ephebus, that, moreover, he was a conductor of souls; now, supposing we knew none or only some of these facts, which we certainly should not, if classical dictionaries had not taught them us, how could we argue that this is Orpheus and that Hermes? Is the meaning of a work of Art to depend on Lempriere and Dr. William Smith? At that rate the sculptor might as well have let alone all such distinctions, and merely written under one figure *Orpheus* or *Amphion*, whichever it might be, under the other *Hermes* or *Zethus;* this would not have pre-supposed more knowledge on our part, since it seems even easier to learn the Greek alphabet than

the precise attributes of various antique gods and demi-gods, and then, too, no mistake would have been possible, we should have had no choice, the figure *must* be either Orpheus or Amphion, Hermes or Zethus, since the artist himself said so. But this would be an admission of the incapacity of the art or the artist, like the old device of writing — "This is a lion," "This is a horse;" well, but, after all, how are we able to recognise a painted lion or a horse? Is it not, thanks to previous knowledge, to our acquaintance with a live horse or live lion? if we had never seen either, could we say, "This is a lion," "That is a horse?" evidently not. But then, most people can recognise a horse or a lion, while they cannot be expected to recognise a person they have never seen, especially a purely imaginary one; the case is evidently one of degree; if we had never seen a cow, and did not know that cows are milked, we should no more understand the meaning of a representation of cow-milking than we should understand the meaning of a picture of Achilles in Scyros if we know nothing about Achilles. The comprehension of the subject of a work

of art would therefore seem to require certain previous information; the work of art would seem to be unable to tell its story itself, unless we have the key to that story. Now, this is not the case with literature; given the comprehension of the separate words, no further information is required to understand the meaning, the subject of prose or verse; Virgil's lines pre-suppose no knowledge of the story of Orpheus, they themselves give the knowledge of it. The difference, then, between the poem and the bas-relief is that the story is absolutely contained in the former, and not absolutely contained in the latter; the story of Orpheus is part of the organic whole, of the existence of the poem; the two are inseparable, since the one is formed out of the other; whereas, the story of Orpheus is separate from the organic existence of the bas-relief, it is arbitrarily connected with it, and they need not co-exist. What then is the bas-relief? A meaningless thing, to which we have wilfully attached a meaning which is not part or parcel of it — a blank sheet of paper on which we write what comes into our head, and which itself can tell us nothing.

As we look up perplexedly at the bas-relief, which, after having been as confused, has now become well nigh as blank as our mind, we are startled by hearing our name from a well-known voice behind us. A young painter stands by our side, a creature knowing or thinking very little beyond his pencils and brushes, serenely unconscious of literature and science in his complete devotion to art. A few trivial sentences are exchanged, during which we catch our friend's eye glancing at the bas-relief. "I never noticed that before," he remarks, "Do you know, I like it better than anything else in this room. Strange that I should not have noticed it before."

"It is a very interesting work," we answer; adding, with purposely feigned decision, "Of course you see that it represents Orpheus and Eurydice, not Antiope and her sons."

The painter, whose instinctive impression on the point we have thus tried to elicit, seems wholly unmoved by this remark; the fact literally passes across his mind without in the least touching it.

"Does it? Ah, what a splendid mass

of drapery! That grand, round fold and those small, fine vertical ones. I should like to make a sketch of that."

A sort of veil seems suddenly to fall off our mental eyes; these simple, earnest words, this intense admiration seem to have shed new light into our mind.

This fellow, who knows or cares apparently nothing whatever about either Orpheus or Antiope, has not found the bas-relief a blank; it has spoken for him, the clear, unmistakeable language of lines and curves, of light and shade, a language needing no interpreters, no dictionaries; and it has told him the fact, the fact depending on no previous knowledge, irrefutable and eternal, that it is beautiful. And as our eyes follow his, and we listen to his simple, unaffected, unpoetical exclamations of admiration at this combination of lines, or that bend of a limb, we recognise that if poetry has its unchangeable effects, its power which, in order to be felt, requires only the comprehension of words; art also has its unchangeable effects, its power, its supreme virtue, which all can feel who have eyes and minds that can see. The bas-relief does not neces-

sarily tell us the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, as Virgil's lines do, that is not inherent in its nature as in theirs; but it tells us the fact of its beauty, and that fact is vital, eternal, and indissolubly connected with it.

To appreciate a work of art means, therefore, to appreciate that work of art itself, as distinguished from appreciating something outside it, something accidentally or arbitrarily connected with it; to appreciate Virgil's lines means to appreciate his telling of the story of Orpheus, his choice of words and his metre; to appreciate the bas-relief means to appreciate the combination of forms and lights and shades; and a person who cared for Virgil's lines because they suggested the bas-relief or for the bas-relief because it suggested Virgil's lines, would equally be appreciating neither, since his pleasure depended on something separate from the work of art itself.

Yet this is what constantly happens, and happens on account of two very simple and legitimate movements of the mind: that of comparison and that of association. Let us examine what we have called, for want of a

more definite word, the movement of comparison. You are enjoying a work of art, plastic and musical; what you enjoy is the work of art itself, the combination of lines, lights and shades and colours in the one case, the combination of modulations and harmonies in the other; now, as this enjoyment means merely the pleasing activity of your visual and æsthetic, or acoustic and æsthetic organism, you instinctively wish to increase the activity in order to increase the pleasure; the increase of activity is obtained by approximating as much as possible to the creative activity of the original artist, by going over every step that he has gone over, by creating the work of art over again in the intensity of appreciation. If it be a plastic work, you produce your pencil and brushes and copy it; if it be a musical composition, you try and reproduce it by means of your voice or your instrument; and you thus obtain the highest degree of æsthetical activity and pleasure compatible with mere appreciation. But supposing you can neither draw, nor sing, nor play; supposing you have only another set of faculties, those dealing with thoughts and images, those of the artist

in words, of the writer. How will you obtain that high degree of æsthetical activity, how will you go over the steps of the original creator? You will find that words cannot copy the work of art, plastic or musical; that lines and lights and shades, or modulations and harmonies, must be seen or heard to be appreciated; that, in short, you have no means of absolutely reproducing what you have seen or heard; — instinctively, unintentionally, unconsciously, you will seek for an equivalent for it; you will try and produce with the means at your disposal something analogous to the work of art, you will obtain your æsthetic activity from another set of faculties; not being able to draw or to sing, you will think and feel, and, in default of producing a copy, you will produce an equivalent. But the same result is not obtainable by different means; a painter, copying a statue, will produce not a statue but a picture; a sculptor copying a picture will produce a model, not a sketch; yet the difference between the *modus operandi* of painting and sculpture is as nothing compared with that between the *modus operandi* of art which appeals to the eye or the ear,

and art which appeals direct to the mind; of art which deals with visible or audible shapes, and of art which deals with purely abstract thoughts and images. How much greater, then, must not also be the difference in the result! Instead of a statue you have, not a picture, but a poem, a work of art of totally different nature from the one which you originally tried to reproduce. Instead of visual or audible forms, you have feelings and fancies; and if you compare your equivalent with the original work of art you will probably find that it has little in common with it: you had seen a beautifully chiselled head, and you say that you had perceived a beautiful emotion; you had heard a lovely modulation, and you have written that you witnessed a pathetic parting; instead of your eye and your ear, your imagination and feeling have been active, and the product of their activity is a special, separate one. So, in your desire to appreciate a work of art, you have, after a fashion, created a new one, good or bad, and having created it, there are a hundred chances against one that you will henceforward perceive your creation and not the original work; that

you will no longer perceive lines or sounds, but fancies and feelings, in short, that instead of appreciating the work of art itself, you will appreciate merely your intellectual equivalent of it, that is to say, something which most distinctly and emphatically is *not* the work of art.

The process of association is even commoner: you have taken interest in some story, or some form, your mind has worked upon it; you are shown a work of art whose name, often nothing more, connects it with this story or poem, and your thoughts being full of the latter, you apply to the work of art the remarks you had made about the story or poem; you see in the work of art the details of that story or poem; you look at it as a mere illustration; very often you do not look at it at all; for although your bodily eyes may be fixed on the picture or statue, your intellectual eyes are busy with some recollection or impression in your mind; it is the case of the bas-relief of the Villa Albani, of the pleasure received from Virgil's lines being re-awakened by the mere circumstance of the bas-relief being called, rightly or wrongly, Orpheus and Eurydice;

it is the story of a hundred interpretations of works of art, of people seeing a comic expression in a certain group at the Villa Ludovisi because they imagined it to represent Papirius and his mother, while other people found the same group highly tragic, because they fancied it represented Electra and Orestes; it is the old story of violent emotion, attributed to wholly unemotional music, because the words to which it is arbitrarily connected happened to be pathetic; the endless story of delusions of all sorts, of associations of feelings and ideas as accidental as those which make certain tunes or sights depress us because we happened to be in a melancholy mood when we first saw or heard them.

What becomes of the real, inherent effect of the work of art itself in the midst of such concatenations of fancies and associations? How can we listen to its own magic speech, its language of lines and colours and sounds, when our mind is full of confused voices telling us of different and irrelevant things? Where, at such times, is our artistic appreciation, and what is it worth? Should we then, if such a thing were possible, forbid

such comparisons, such associations? Should we voluntarily deprive ourselves of all such pleasure as is not given by the work of art itself?

No, but we should restrain such impressions; we should, as far as we can, remain conscious of the fact that they are mere effects of comparison and association, that they are not the work of art, but something distinct from it, and that the work of art itself exists in the lines, tints, lights and shades of the picture or statue, in the modulations and harmonies of a composition, and that all the rest is gratuitously added by ourselves. Nay, we should remember that there could not even have been that very comparison, that very association if there had been no previous real artistic perception; that unless we had first cared for Virgil's Orpheus for its own sake, we could not afterwards have cared for the bas-relief on its account.

We confess that we have ourselves become instinctively jealous of such foreign causes of pleasure in art, jealous because we have been pained by their constant encroachment; the feeling may be an exaggerated one, but

it is a natural reaction. We have thus caught ourselves almost regretting that pictures should have any subjects; we have sometimes felt that the adaptation of music to the drama is a sort of profanation; and all this because we have too often observed that the subject seemed to engross so much attention as to make people forget the picture, and that the drama made people misinterpret the music; and that criticism itself, instead of checking this tendency, has done much to further it. Yes, critics, grave and emphatic thinkers, have spoken as if the chief merit of the painter had consisted in clearly expressing some story, which in all probability was not worth expressing, some dull monkish legend which his genius alone could render tolerable; as if the chief aim of the composer were to follow the mazes of some wretched imbecile libretto, which has become endurable thanks only to his notes; as if the immortal were to be chained to the mortal, and mediocrity, inferiority, mere trumpery fact or trumpery utility were to bridle and bestride the divine hippogriff of art, and, like another Astolfo, fly up on its back into the regions of immortality. Art-

ists themselves have been of this way of thinking, we cannot say of feeling, for, as long as they were true artists, their instinctive feelings must have propelled them in a very different direction. Gluck, that great dramatist, who was greatest when least dramatic, thought that music was made for the sake of the drama, that its greatest glory was to express the difference, as he himself wrote, between a princess and a waiting-maid, between a Spartan and a Phrygian, to follow the steps of a play as its humble retainer and commentator. Gluck composed his music for the sake of the dramas; but, O irony of art! the dramas are recollected only for the sake of his music. Let the artist be humble, mistrustful of his own art, let him believe it to be subservient to something outside it, devote it magnanimously to some purpose of utility, or some expression of fact, sacrifice it throughout; it will be all in vain; if his work be excellent, it will subordinate all to itself, it will swallow up every other interest, throw into the shade every other utility.

One day the Pope's banker, Agostino Chigi, came to Master Rafael of Urbino,

and said to him — "I am building a little pleasure villa in which to entertain my friends. Baldassare Peruzzi has made the plans, Sebastiano del Piombo has designed the arabesques, Nanni da Udine will paint me the garlands of fruit and flowers; it must be perfection. You shall paint me the walls of the open hall looking out on the Tiber, that it may be a fit place wherein to sup and make merry with popes and cardinals and princes." "Very good," answered Rafael.

The object was to obtain a dining-hall, and the fresco was to be there merely as an ornament; but Rafael painted his Galatea, and behold, the hall could no longer be used as a dining-room; every one crowded into it to see the fresco; the hall has now become a gallery, and the real property, less of its owners, who cannot make use of it, than of the whole world, who insist on entering it; the room now exists only for the sake of the fresco, yet the fresco was originally intended to exist only for it. This is the inevitable course of art; we call in beauty as a servant, and see, like some strange dæmon, it becomes the master; it may answer our call, but we have to do its bidding.

We have strayed far away from Orpheus and Eurydice, while thus following the train of ideas suggested by the story of the bas-relief. Yet we may return to the subject, and use it as an illustration of our last remark. We have said much against the common tendency towards transporting on to a work of art an interest not originally due to it, because, by this means, we are apt to lose the interest which does belong to the work of art. But, if only each could get its due, each exert its power unimpaired, there could be nothing more delightful than thus to enjoy the joint effect of several works of art; not, according to the notion of certain æsthetic visionaries — who do not see that singers cannot be living Greek statues nor librettists poets, nor scene-painters Poussins — in one clumsy ambiguous monster spectacle, but in our minds, in our fancy; if, conscious of the difference between them, we could unite in one collection the works of various arts: people the glades and dingles of Keats with the divinities we have seen in marble, play upon the reed of the Praxitelian Faun the woodland melodies of Mozart's Tamino. It would thus be the

highest reward for self-scrutinising æsthetic humility, for honest appreciation of each art for itself, for brave sacrifice of our own artistic whimsies and vanities, to enable us to bring up simultaneously the recollection of Virgil's nobly pathetic lines, of the exquisitely simple and supple forms of the bas-relief, of the grand and tender music of Gluck, and to unite them in one noble pageant of the imagination, evoked by the spell of those two names: Orpheus and Eurydice.

III.

POSTSCRIPT OR APOLOGY.

I HAVE had the sense that now, before these foregoing pages be definitely printed — before what have been living thoughts and feelings be irrevocably composed and stiffened, embalmed, distinctly and unmistakably prepared to last, as things are permitted to last, only in death — I have had the sense that while yet I can, I must say one or two more things. But now, I can scarcely tell why, it seems to me as if there could by no means be anything to say. It is a mood, due to the moment and place. All about me there is broad, scarce-flickering shadow on the grass, and stirring of sunlit tree-tops and vague buzzing of bees in the limes; and across the low ivied wall comes from the black, crumbly-stoned chapel faint music of organ and white-sounding voices, which swells and pierces through the silence (as a green reed bud swells and pierces its soft scaly core) and dies away, making you suddenly very conscious of twitter of sparrows and chucking of jackdaws; bringing suddenly close home to you, with the silence, a sense of solid reality. So, instead of saying

what I wished, it seems to me most evident that there is nothing to say, that there scarcely could have been anything worth saying. It is enervate, I suppose; but so it is. I wonder how any one can ever have felt inclined to write about art — how art can ever have been worth writing about. Everything around seems so incomparably more interesting does it not, than art; so entirely beyond the power of writing to convey or imitate. Above, high up, there are two great branches of lime, apparently printed distinctly on to the pale blue sky, black wood dividing and subdividing and projecting, green leaves and light yellow blossom, the sun shining straight through; it seems so simple. But try and paint it: those two branches, which seem at first so well-defined, so close together, so closely clapped against the sky, do you now see how far apart they really are, how separated by a gulf of luminous air, how freely suspended, poised, at infinite distance, in the far receding pale blue; those green leaves and yellow blossoms, which are not green nor yellow, but something shadowy and at the same time luminous, are clearly defined and yet

undefinable; the sunshine which we thought at first one plain beam of light is now a white, vague sheen, a shimmer; now one light spark, one tremulous star between the leaves, or a waving network of rays, long, then short, white, coloured, iridescent, shaking, shifting, dancing. Paint it, describe it if you have a mind to, my friend the poet, my friend the painter; I have not.

This is one of those moments when reality, and the enjoyment thereof, fill one with a sense, self-contemptuous, sceptical, almost cynical, and yet pleasurable and stoically self-flattering in the recognition of our own importance, a pervading illogical sense of the futility, the unreality, the museum-glass-case uselessness of art. It seems as if art were enjoyed because it has been produced, not produced because it is to be enjoyed; as if mankind had acquired an elaborate pleasure in its own works because they are its own works; as if all of us, instead of passively receiving the impression of beauty in the same way that we passively perceive the rustle of the branches, the twitter of the birds, the light upon the grass, our soul staying quietly, as it were, at home,

and receiving these things as visits from nature; went forth, when art appeals to us, on a sort of journey or grand tour, well provided with guide-book knowledge, schooled beforehand which road to take, what turnings of feeling to expect, what baggage of poetic and historic association to lug with us, what little mole-hill eminences of thought and feeling to stand upon, morally on tiptoe, looking down upon an artistic scene upon which we have never before set eyes, and which is yet as well-known, as drearily familiar to us as is the inside of our pocket.

Such is my present mood; fickle, contradictory, unworthy, slightly apostatising and blasphemous to my own deeper convictions, to my own written ideas, you say; you, my friend, the poet, who insist upon people being steadfast, unchangeable in all their feelings, because you poets keep your own moods quite steady, as photographers keep their victims, until you have taken the concentrated likeness, and can shift your souls into another equally steadfast, unchangeable pose. Such is my present mood, and you may call me what names you please for

having it. All that concerns me is that most certainly this present mood of mine happens to be the one, of all others, in which I am least likely to be able to muster up those two or three remarks upon art with which I ought to conclude, and finally despatch into the limbo of things printed this collection of studies. The things must be said. If I carry my papers home, sit down at my table, fix my eyes upon the patterned wall-paper, I shall, in all probability, get back within five minutes all that the usual ideas, the usual feelings about art, in the contemplation of that patterned blankness; all that phantasmagoria of art appreciation for which we carry all the necessary mechanism, self-manufactured (yet very neat) out of fragments of culture and philosophy, in a sort of little travelling case appended to our soul. A fact this, which is suggestive; for does not our modern, imaginative appreciation of art, do not all those wondrous beautiful and horrible dreams and nightmares, suggested to us by a quite plain and unsuggestive picture, statue, or piece of music, depend a little upon our contemplation of the methodical, zig-zag and twirligig

patterned vacuity of modern life? For I suspect that, in former days (I confess I do not know exactly when), art may have been perceived pretty much in the same manner in which we perceive nature: that the enjoyed perception of a beautiful statue, of a picture, of a grand song, may have come interrupting, with pleasant interludes of quiet self-unconscious pleasure, the matter-of-fact, but not monotonous business of life; even as my work now, my conscientious, deliberate, attempted work, is for ever being interrupted by the flicker of the lime-leaf shadows, light and clear, on my paper, by the breeze which sweeps the branches and carries away the drying manuscript on the grass.

Now it seems to me quite evident that art cannot be any such thing, as long as its enjoyment or supposed enjoyment is a sort of deliberate mental gymnastics, which our desire for well-balanced activity, or our wish to display a certain unnecessary gracefulness of intellectual motions, impose upon us; setting aside a certain portion of our time for counteracting, in the artistic gymnasiums (rows of soaped poles, and hurdles, and ladders, and expanses of padded floor, quite

as unlike as may be from the climbable trees and jumpable brooks which we ought to meet in our walks), called galleries, concerts, etc., the direful slackening of our muscles and stiffening of our joints, almost inevitable in our cramped intellectual shop life of to-day. We writhe, clinging with arms and legs, up the soaped poles of æsthetic feeling, slipping and rising again, straining and twisting, to plop down at last on to the padding and the sawdust; we dangle, with constrained grace, high in æsthetic contemplation, flying, with a clutching swing, from idea to idea: distant, oscillating in mid air, like so many trapeze acrobats; and then we think that an hour or so, every now and then, of such exercise is all (except brutal slumber) that can be required as repose in our intellectual life. For we are all of us getting more and more into the habit of enjoying, not so much art, as the feelings and thoughts, the theories and passions, for which we make it the excuse. "Nay," you will say "you yourself have written, are printing, correcting, and publishing a whole volume of whims and ideas about art, you yourself are for ever

theorising and becoming angry on the subject — what right have you to object thereto in others?"

None, perhaps; I have never pretended that I am not as bad as my neighbours; but the whole gist of these my theorisings is that people should try and take art more simply than they do; that, if not called upon to try and persuade others to simpler courses, they should not theorise themselves. By theorising, I mean, incorrectly perhaps, all manner of irrelevant fantasticating, whether it take the shape of seeking in art for hidden psychological meanings or moral values, or of using art merely as a suggestion of images and emotions, the perception of which infallibly interferes with, and sometimes entirely replaces, the perception of the art itself. To you, I know, all that I have written seems extremely narrow, seems to limit excessively the powers of art, the enjoyments we can derive therefrom. But I think otherwise; I understand fully that, in the first place, there is included, under the general name of art, the result of ever so many intellectual activities: activities of mere psychological perception, of mere

mechanical imitation and handling, which, though belonging quite equally to other concerns, such as science or handicraft, are yet pleasurable both to him who exerts and to him who perceives them; I understand that there are so many different sorts of pictures, statues, and poems, and so many different kinds of minds to see and read them; I see that so many questions of mental and physical why and how are connected with every sort of visible or audible thing, that there is nothing, however utterly bad and idiotic and abortive, among the productions of mankind (and, consequently, among the things called works of art), out of which some sort of intellect may not derive very keen enjoyment. The enjoyment, however, may be merely similar to that with which a physiologist studies a disease, or a psychologist a form of vice; and, to my mind, this sort of enjoyment, which does not depend upon any perception of beauty, is no more artistic than would be that of such men of science. And my wish is merely that such pleasure be not substituted where there is an object to afford, or a mind to receive, the mere simple, honest

pleasure in beauty. Moreover, with regard to your imputation of narrowness, I think, on the contrary, that, could we break ourselves of our habit of replacing or alloying real artistic interests with irrelevant matters, we should (and this is to my mind a great reason for so doing) be ridding ourselves of a great number of imaginary restrictions to our enjoyment. For in many, nay, most artistic things there is, in greater or less degree, beauty and enjoyableness; nor should we always despise the less, since we cannot always obtain the greater. I do not mean that all art is equally valuable; such intellectual democracy, Walt. Whitmanish assertion of the equality of body and soul, good and evil, high and low, being just the most brutal rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul dishonesty that I know; but I think that in most art there is something valuable, and that we ought to make the most of it, and doubtless should, did not our eternal theorising interfere, with its arbitrary standard and requirements. Were we guided solely by our feelings, we should not be ashamed of taking a certain pleasure in the half-dapper, half-grotesque stone nymphs and tritons, with golden-

lichened tresses and beards of green pond ooze, who smirk among the ill-clipped hedges, and puff at their horns among the flags and lilies of every abandoned Prince-Bishop or Margrave's garden, where the apricots ripen against the palace wall, and the old portraits fade behind the blistered palace shutters; we should not be ashamed of being just a little the better pleased for some common dance tune, heard vaguely, and between our work, from the neighbouring houses; we should not be ashamed of liking our village church all the more for the atrocious stained glass which we have decried as vandalism, when the sunlight falls rosy, and golden, and green, through its monstrosities on to the extremely chaste, but excessively dreary, grey arches and pillars. We should not be so hypocritical to ourselves, so exclusive in our adoration of only the best pictures, and statues, and music, to appreciate rightly whose great merit we ought (but do not), to appreciate also the small, more appreciable merit of the less perfect things of art. When, instead of enjoying, we fantasticate in theory, we not only remove a proportion of our attention

from the work in hand, but also exclude ourselves from getting the good we might from other things; one man will positively whip his soul out of enjoying the sweet solemnity of Claude's sea sunsets, the tragedy pomp of Poussin's black rustling ilex-groves, and ominous green evening skies, because he seeks in painting a moral sincerity which is incompatible with a false shadow or a lumpishly rendered cloud. Another man thinks music ought to be the expression of dramatic passion, and closes his ears to the splendours of poor Rossini's vocal arabesques, theory-blinded to the sense that the powers of creating beauty of the composer of *Tristram*, is after all akin to the beauty making genius of the composer of *Semiramis*. Meanwhile, he who merely enjoys is able to enjoy; is able (oh wonder of wonders) to be what the man of theories never can be: just, because he can be grateful for every amount of bestowed good.

There is another objection which you may make, which (though perhaps unformulated) you certainly will feel, against me and my book. You have an uncomfortable sense

that in some way, although our artistic life may gain, a certain amount of life which goes on in or about art — we do not clearly know which — is being cramped: a life of the fancy and feelings, which weave between ourselves and the things which surround us and the things which are absent, between the present moment and the long-gone past, strange crossed and recrossed threads, webs of association, infinitely fine, iridescently connected by almost invisible filaments, floating and oscillating in the vacuum of our lives, for ever changing, breaking, reknotting their sensitive filaments. For in most of the things which we see and hear with free, unpractical mind in the moments when we belong to ourselves and to the present, there exists a capacity for importance, nay for fascination, quite independent of beauty and of the pleasures which beauty can give. There is in such things more than what they can give alike to every one; there is also what they can give to each separate; they have, besides the clear language of form, which is equally intelligible to all men, a half articulate language for every individual man, a language of associa-

tions, vague, poor, if you will, broken by something which might be a laugh or a sob; an imperfect irrational language, which is yet, even when spoken by some trifling thing, by a bar or two of trivial melody, by a door such as we have many times passed through, or a chair such as we have looked at when not, as now, empty; by a mere scent or touch; is yet, this mumble-jumble language, more dear to us than all the eloquence and poetry which our soul hears from a great work of art. I grant you all this. But I do not think that such things need be interfered with by looking at art simply and with straightforwardness; interfered with they cannot be. Nor could I wish it to be otherwise. For in some ways I do think that almost better than the mere perception of the work of another, than the mere perception of statue or picture or poem, is this evolving from out of ourselves of vague beauty and goodness: our fancy and our feelings do not create anything enduring, but they are active, they create. You artists, you poets must be broad awake, for you can and are bound to give to us the sober realities of beauty; but we who can-

not, we can yet sometimes dream, if but for a moment, of an intangible, vague fairyland; and of this we must not be cheated. Out of the broken, fragmentary realities of life there must arise, ever and again for all of us, strange involuntary visions, which have greater power over us, more charm for us, than all the art in the world. And of such things art has no right to be jealous; they are beyond it. And thus, I will confess to to you, as I fasten together these last pages of my book, and rise from the grass, sere in the sunshine, and sprinkled with daisies in the shadow of each tree, I will confess to you that more nearly appealing to me, dearer also, than antique bas-relief or song of Mozart, has been the vague remembrance, evoked by trivial word or sight, of that early winter afternoon on the ilex girded battlements of Belcaro, looking down upon the sere oak-woods, flushed by the low sun, upon the hazy olive slopes and walls and towers of Siena. And, moreover, I will even confess (as severest self-chastisement to a writer on art, as complete expiation of æsthetic dogmatism and fantastications), while we walk across the warm grass and

out through the low archway of black and flakewise crumbling stone, that I foresee that many a time in the future there will arise between me and the fresco or picture at which I am looking, a vision of this old world garden, of the ivied chapel buttress, the flowering lime, the daisied grass, the copper beech leaves, ruddy and diaphanous, against the pale, moist English sky; that, sometimes, there will come into my head something — something ill-defined, pleasurable, painful — which will make me read only with my eyes; which will make me (worst humiliation) lose the thread of my theories, of my thoughts, of my sentence. And, after this confession, I think I can say no more.

OXFORD, *July* 21, 1881.

PAGET, VIOLET, (Vernon Lee); born 1856—

1 Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy. (Satchell.) 8vo, 1880.
Second edition, Illustrated, with a New preface. (Unwin.) 4to, 1907.

2 Belcaro: Being Essays on Sundry Æsthetical Questions. (Satchell.) Cr. 8vo, 1881.
Re-issued in "a new edition," text unchanged. (Unwin.) Cr. 8vo, 1887.
The three essays reprinted in *The Brocade Series* were *The Child in the Vatican*, (1900); *Chapel Master Kreisler* (1901) and *In Umbria* (1901).

3 Ottilie: An Eighteenth-Century Idyl. (Unwin.) Sq. 8vo, Decorated cover, 1883.

4 The Prince of the Hundred Soups: A Puppet-Show in Narrative. Edited with an Introduction by V. L. Four illustrations in sepia by Sara Birch. (Unwin.) Sq. 8vo, Decorated cover, 1883. A cheaper edition was also issued at 3s6d net.

5 Euphorion: Being Studies of the Antique and the Mediæval in the Renaissance. Demy 8vo, (Unwin.) 2 vols., 1884. Second edition. Demy 8vo, (7s6d), 1886.

6 The Countess of Albany, (W. H. Allen & Co.) Cr. 8vo, 1884. Second edition. Illustrated, 12mo. 1910.

7 Miss Brown: A Novel. (Blackwoods.) 3 vols. Cr. 8vo, 1884.

8 Baldwin: Being Dialogues on Views and Aspirations. (Unwin.) Demy 8vo, 1886.

9 A Phantom Lover. Fcap. 8vo, (Unwin) ? 1886. Reprinted by Roberts Bros., Boston, 1886. See also *Hauntings*, 1890.

10 Juvenilia: Being a Second Series of Essays on Sundry Æsthetical Questions. (Unwin.) 2 vols., Fcap. 8vo, 1887.

11 Hauntings: Fantastic Stories. (Heinemann.) Cr. 8vo, 1890.
Contents: Amour Dure; Dionea; Oke of Okehurst, or The Phantom Lover; A Wicked Voice.
Second edition, 12mo. 1906.

12 Vanitas: Polite Stories. (Heinemann.) Cr. 8vo, 1892.
Contents: Lady Tal; A Worldly Woman; The Legend of Madame Krasinska, (this last was re-issued in *The Brocade Series*, 1903).
Second edition, (including the hitherto unpublished story entitled "A Frivolous Conversation," 12mo. 1911.

13 Althea: A Second Book of Dialogues on Aspirations and Duties. (Osgood McIlvaine & Co.) Cr. 8vo, 1894. Second edition, 12mo. 1906 (?).

14 Renaissance Fancies and Studies: Being a sequel to Euphorion. (Smith, Elder & Co.) Cr. 8vo, 1895. Second edition, 12mo. 1906 (?).

15 Art and Life. An Essay. 8vo. East Aurora, N. Y. 1896. See *Laurus Nobilis*.

16 Limbo and Other Essays. (Richards.) Fcap. 8vo, 1897. Second edition, 12mo. 1908.

17 Genius Loci: Names on Places. (Richards.) Fcap. 8vo, 1899. Second edition, 12mo. 1908 (?).

18 Ariadne in Mantua: A Romance in Five Acts. (Blackwell.) Cr. 8vo. Wrappers, Rizzi design. Oxford, 1903. The rarest of all Vernon Lee's volumes. First reprinted in *The Bibelot* for January and February, 1906, including essay *The Lakes of Mantua* from *Genius Loci*. Reissued in *Old World Series*, 1906 and 1912.

19 Penelope Brandling: A Tale of the Welsh coast in the Eighteenth Century. (Unwin.) 24mo. 1903.

20 Pope Jacynth and Other Fantastic Tales. (Richards.) Cr. 8vo, 1904. Second edition, 12mo. 1908. (?)

21 The Life of Saint Mary Magdalen translated from the Italian of an unknown fourteenth century writer by Valentina Hawtrey with an Introduction by Vernon Lee. Illustrated. Cr. 8vo, 1904.

22 Hortus Vitæ: Essays on the Gardening of Life. 12mo. 1904.

23 The Enchanted Woods and other essays on the genius of places. 12mo. 1905.

24 The Spirit of Rome: Leaves from a Diary (1895–1905) 12mo. 1906.

25 Sister Benvenuta and the Christ Child: An Eighteenth-Century Legend. Red cloth, 32mo. (Richards.) 1906. Re-issued in *The Bibelot*, for December 1907. Reprinted in *Vest Pocket Series*, 1911.

26 The Sentimental Traveller: Notes on Places. 12mo. 1908.

27 Gospels of Anarchy and other Contemporary Studies. (Unwin.) 8vo, 1908.

28 Laurus Nobilis: Chapters on Art and Life, 12mo. 1909. No. 15 would seem to be an essay in its unrevised state now set forth in the essays on "The Use of Beauty" and "The Higher Harmonies."

29 Beauty and Ugliness and other Studies in Psychological Æsthetics. 8vo, 1912.

30 Vital Lies: Studies of some varieties of recent Obscurantism. 12mo. 2 vols. 1912.

31 An English Writer's Notes on England. See *Scribner's Magazine* for 1913.

32 A Tower of Mirrors. 12mo. (Not yet issued.)

It is understood that all first editions in this list bear the London imprint except as noted.

The Bibelot

"Forget
That stars and suns are met to set,
That love grows old, or eyes are wet."

THE *pathos of the Past, especially the past of one's poetic career, is seldom set before us with greater poignancy than in Mr. Edmund Gosse's Preface to his* Collected Poems, (*London, 1911*). *In tenderest tones of reminiscence he names his earlier books of verse:* On Viol and Flute, (*1873,*) New Poems, (*1879,*) Firdausi in Exile, (*1885,*) *and* In Russet and Silver, (*1894*). *In making our selections we have drawn from all these volumes and in addition print a few poems that Mr. Gosse has seen fit to drop from his collected text. The lovely little* Dizain *appears nowhere save in* New Poems; Old Mortality *is only found in the* Scottish Art Review, (*1889*); *while* Playthings *and* The Wall-Paper *from* In Russet and Silver *are omitted in the final revision.*

A reawakened interest shown by a complete translation of de Banville's Ballades [1]

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[1] The Ballades of Théodore de Banville. *Translated into English Verse by Archibald T. Strong.*

will recall the fact that over twenty years ago Mr. Gosse wrote his own ballade on the death of the French poet when a version in English was, so to speak, unthinkably remote. But, when all is said, concerning Edmund Gosse as a poet, one should seek and find him as the man of letters in his prose. The best and truest book of all, the one that discovers the heart and soul of him most fully, is Father and Son: a Study in Two Temperaments, (*1907*). *No reader of the poems alone would gather such intimate knowledge of child-life as disclosed in this book of heart to heart intimacy.* The Wall-Paper, *for example, is a moving recollection of early childhood that we may the more easily retain in our affections after reading this autobiography. One could have wished there had been more of the same humanism "all breathing passion far above" as revealed in this exquisite thing!*

We have already given in earlier volumes of The Bibelot *so much of Austin Dobson and of Andrew Lang that to omit Edmund Gosse would argue a serious defect in our scheme of poetic appreciations. Dobson's* Sat est Scripsisse *is a faultless Proem to these selections, while the* Epilogue *has that touch of things seen or of words said for the last time.*

LYRICS
By
EDMUND GOSSE

PRELUDE.

Take hands with me, dear unknown friend, and find
Some downy hollow, sheltered from the wind,
Where summer meadows overlook the sea;
There let us, in the grass at length reclined,

Hold converse, while the melting air around
Is full of golden light and murmuring sound,
And let your soul shine frankly upon me,
And I will tell the best my heart has found.

But first hold up against the light your wrist,
Where blue veins hide like unhewn amethyst,
So shall I know that you have bodily fire,
And purple that the sacred sun hath kissed.

Else, if your blood be chilly, go your way,—
I have no songs to sing to you to-day;
The goal to which our lyric hearts aspire
Must be the very core of life in May.

1873.

THERE must always be something pathetic to an elderly man in reviving the recollections of his youth, and nowhere can those recollections be so poignant as in the verses with which, however artlessly, he expressed the passions, the reveries, the tender hopes and fears of adolescence. After thirty years he may hesitate to examine again what he now remembers scarcely more clearly than does his most indifferent reader. It is not without alarm and emotion that I turned to pages that had been unopened so long. They recalled to me much that may perhaps no longer be found in them by strangers; they revived many sensations in myself which may well have evaporated for the nerves of others; the sincerity with which I know that they were written, the ecstasy of interpretation, the sweetness of response to the appeal of nature, may not have been sufficient to provide that fugitive charm which alone keeps verse alive. I cannot tell; I put them forth with a strange timidity. They pleased once: it is at least just possible that they may please again.

PREFACE TO *The Collected Poems* (1911).

"SAT EST SCRIPSISSE."

TO E. G., WITH A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS.

WHEN You and I have wandered beyond the reach of call,
And all our Works immortal lie scattered on the Stall,
It may be some new Reader, in that remoter age,
Will find the present Volume and listless turn the page.

For him I speak these verses. And, Sir (I say to him),
This Book you see before you,—this masterpiece of Whim,
Of Wisdom, Learning, Fancy (if you will, please, attend),—
Was written by its Author, who gave it to his Friend.

For they had worked together,—been Comrades of the Pen;
They had their points at issue, they differed now and then;
But both loved Song and Letters, and each had close at heart
The hopes, the aspirations, the "dear delays" of Art.

And much they talked of Measures, and more they talked of Style,
Of Form and "lucid Order," of "labour of the File;"
And he who wrote the writing, as sheet by sheet was penned
(This all was long ago, Sir!), would read it to his Friend.

They knew not, nor cared greatly, if they were spark or star;
They know to move is somewhat, although the goal be far;
And larger light or lesser, this thing at least is clear,
They served the Muses truly,—their service was sincere.

This tattered page you see, Sir, this page alone remains
(Yes,—fourpence is the lowest!) of all those pleasant pains;
And as for him that read it, and as for him that wrote,
No Golden Book enrolls them among its "Names of Note."

And yet they had their office. Though they to-day are passed,
They marched in that procession where is no first or last;
Though cold is now their hoping, though they no more aspire,
They too had once their ardour—they handed on the fire.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

DIZAIN.

ARTIST *in verse, to whom the world appears*
Most real, and yet the mirrored form of truth,
From whom alone the wasteful lapse of years
Robs nothing of earth's beauty or her youth,
Be grave, but joyous, with no taint of ruth,
For thou canst make an April shower of tears
Immortal, and so lull the aching ears
Of grief, that she shall laugh in time to come,
When her own melancholy voice she hears
Grown sweet on lips that never can be dumb.

THE WHITETHROAT.

I HEARD the Whitethroat sing
Last eve at twilight when the wind was dead,
And her sleek bosom and her fair smooth head
Vibrated, ruffling, and her olive wing
Trembled. So soft her song was that it seemed
As though, in wandering through the copse at noon,
She must have found the holy bough where dreamed
The day-struck Nightingale,
And, listening, must have overheard too soon
The dim rehearsal of that golden tale
That greets the laggard moon.

But through the imitative strain,
Between each gentle cadence, and again
When those clear notes she tried, for which her throat
Was not so capable as fain,
I joyed to hear her own peculiar note
Through all the music float.
And when the gentle song, that streamed away,
Like some enamoured rivulet that flows
Under a night of leaves and flowering may,
Died on the stress of its own lovely pain,—
Even as it died away,
It seemed as if no influence could restrain
The notes from welling in the Whitethroat's brain;
But, with the last faint chords, on fluttering wing
She rose, until she hung in sunset air;
A little way she rose, as if her care
Were all to reach the heavens, her radiant goal,
Then sank among the leaves.
Pathetic singer! with no strength to sing,
And wasted pinions far too weak to bear
The body's weight that mars the singing soul,
In wild disorder, see, her bosom heaves
Scarcely, with quivering plumes,
She wins the sparse bough of that tulip-tree,
Whose leaves unfinished ape her faulty song,
Whose mystic flowers her delicate minstrelsy.
But, hark! how her rich throat resumes
Its broken music, and the garden blooms
Around her, and the flower that waited long

The vast magnolia, rends its roseate husk,
And opens to the dusk;
Odour and song embalm the day's decline.
Ah! pulsing heart of mine,
Flattered beyond all judgment by delight,
This pleasing harmony, this gentle light,
This soft and enervating breeze of flowers,
This magic antechamber of the night
With florid tapestry of twilight hours,
Is this enough for thee?
Lo! from the summit of the tulip-tree
The enamoured Whitethroat answered, "Yes! O yes!"
And once again, with passion and the stress
Of thoughts too tender and too sad to be
Enshrined in any melody she knew,
She rose into the air;
And then, oppressed with pain too keen to bear,
Her last notes faded as she downward flew.

And she was silent. But the night came on;
A whisper rose among the giant trees,
Between their quivering topmost boughs there shone
Broad liquid depths of moonlight-tinted air;
By slow degrees
Full wanton night stole on me unaware.
The wizard silence of the hours of dew
Fell like a mystic presence more and more,
Awing the senses. Then I knew,
But scarcely heard, shot through to the brain's core,

The shrill first prelude of triumphant song,
Cleaving the twilight. Ah! we do thee wrong,
Unequalled Philomela, while thy voice
We hear not; every gentle song and clear
Seems worthy of thee to our poor noonday choice.
But when thy true fierce music, — full of pain,
And wounded memory, and the tone austere
Of antique passion, — fills our hearts again,
We marvel at our light and frivolous ear.

Ah! how they answer from the woodland glades!
How deep and rich the waves of music pour
On night's enchanted shore!
From starlit alleys where the elm-tree shades
The hare's smooth leverets from the moon's distress,
From pools all silvered o'er,
Where water-buds their petals upward press,
Vibrating with the song, and stir, and shed
Their inmost perfume o'er their shining bed,
Yea, from each copse I hear a bird,
As by a more than mortal woe undone,
Sing, as no other creature ever sang,
Since through the Phrygian forest Atys heard
His wild compeers come fluting one by one,
Till all the silent uplands rang and rang.

ON A LUTE FOUND IN A SARCOPHAGUS.

TO L. A. T.

WHAT curled and scented sun-girls, almond-eyed,
With lotos-blossoms in their hands and hair,
Have made their swarthy lovers call them fair,
With these spent strings, when brutes were deified,
And Memnon in the sunrise sprang and cried,
And love-winds smote Bubastis, and the bare
Black breasts of carven Pasht received the prayer
Of suppliants bearing gifts from far and wide!
This lute has out-sung Egypt; all the lives
Of violent passion, and the vast calm art
That lasts in granite only, all lie dead;
This little bird of song alone survives,
As fresh as when its fluting smote the heart
Last time the brown slave wore it garlanded.

WHITE violet garlands, Syrian myrrh,
Deep roseate cups of Chian wine,
Sounds that your deepest being stir,
Sleek limbs that shine,—

Ah! take them, Youth, for youth's fair sake;—
Yet, not forgetting human hap:
The wreath may fade, the nard-box break,
The lyre-string snap.

Ease, bliss, and beauty, which beget
A sensual faith in things that be,
Are like a blossoming garden set
Down by the sea.

They flourish, till some night-wind blows
The swelling tide across the land,
And buries tulip, pink, and rose
In salt and sand.

Since, tho' the slow receding tide
Withdraw its froth and crawling things,
Yet, where that wandering wave hath sighed,
No fresh bloom springs.

LYING IN THE GRASS.

TO THOMAS HARDY.

BETWEEN two russet tufts of summer grass,
I watch the world through hot air as through glass,
And by my face sweet lights and colours pass.

Before me, dark against the fading sky,
I watch three mowers mowing, as I lie:
With brawny arms they sweep in harmony.

Brown English faces by the sun burnt red,
Rich glowing colour on bare throat and head,
My heart would leap to watch them, were I dead!

And in my strong young living as I lie,
I seem to move with them in harmony,—
A fourth is mowing, and that fourth am I.

The music of the scythes that glide and leap,
The young men whistling as their great arms sweep,
And all the perfume and sweet sense of sleep,

The weary butterflies that droop their wings,
The dreamy nightingale that hardly sings,
And all the lassitude of happy things,

Is mingling with the warm and pulsing blood
That gushes through my veins a languid flood
And feeds my spirit as the sap a bud.

Behind the mowers, on the amber air,
A dark-green beech-wood rises, still and fair,
A white path winding up it like a stair.

And see that girl, with pitcher on her head,
And clean white apron on her gown of red,—
Her even-song of love is but half-said:

She waits the youngest mower. Now he goes;
Her cheeks are redder than a wild blush-rose;
They climb up where the deepest shadows close.

But though they pass and vanish, I am there;
I watch his rough hands meet beneath her hair,
Their broken speech sounds sweet to me like prayer.

Ah! now the rosy children come to play,
And romp and struggle with the new-mown hay;
Their clear high voices sound from far away.

They know so little why the world is sad,
They dig themselves warm graves and yet are glad;
Their muffled screams and laughter make me mad!

I long to go and play among them there;
Unseen, like wind, to take them by the hair,
And gently make their rosy cheeks more fair.

The happy children! full of frank surprise,
And sudden whims and innocent ecstasies;
What godhead sparkles from their liquid eyes!

No wonder round those urns of mingled clays
That Tuscan potters fashioned in old days,
And coloured like the torrid earth ablaze,

We find the little gods and loves portrayed,
Through ancient forests wandering undismayed,
Or gathered, whispering, in some pleasant glade.

They knew, as I do now, what keen delight
A strong man feels to watch the tender flight
Of little children playing in his sight.

I do not hunger for a well-stored mind,
I only wish to live my life, and find
My heart in unison with all mankind.

My life is like the single dewy star
That trembles on the horizon's primrose-bar,—
A microcosm where all things living are.

And if, among the noiseless grasses, Death
Should come behind and take away my breath,
I should not rise as one who sorroweth;

For I should pass, but all the world would be
Full of desire and young delight and glee,
And why should men be sad through loss of me?

The light is dying; in the silver blue
The young moon shines from her bright window through:
The mowers all are gone, and I go too.

TO AUSTIN DOBSON.

NEIGHBOUR of the near domain,
Stay awhile your passing wain!
Though to give is more your way,
Take a gift from me to-day!
From my homely store I bring
Signs of my poor husbanding;—
Here a spike of purple phlox,
Here a spicy bunch of stocks,
Mushrooms from my moister fields,
Apples that my orchard yields,—
Nothing,—for the show they make,
Something,—for the donor's sake;
Since for ten years we have been
Best of neighbours ever seen;
We have fronted evil weather,
Nip of critic's frost, together;
We have shared laborious days,
Shared the pleasantness of praise;
Brother not more close to brother,
We have cheered and helped each other:
Till so far the fields of each
Into the other's stretch and reach,
That perchance when both are gone
Neither may be named alone.

June 1885.

THEOCRITUS.

FOR A. LANG'S TRANSLATION.

THE poplars and the ancient elms
Make murmurous noises high in air;
The noonday sunlight overwhelms
The brown cicalas basking there;
But here the shade is deep, and sweet
With new-mown grass and lentisk-shoots,
And far away the shepherds meet
With noisy fifes and flutes.

Their clamour dies upon the ear;
So now bring forth the rolls of song,
Mouth the rich cadences, nor fear
Your voice may do the poet wrong;
Lift up the chalice to our lips,—
Yet see, before we venture thus,
A stream of red libation drips
To great Theocritus.

We are in Sicily to-day;
And, as the honied metre flows,
Battos and Corydon, at play,
Will lose the syrinx, gain the rose;
Soft Amaryllis, too, will bind
Dark violets round her shining hair,
And in the fountain laugh to find
Her sun-browned face so fair.

We are in Sicily to-day;
Ah! foolish world, too sadly wise,
Why didst thou e'er let fade away
Those ancient, innocent ecstasies?
Along the glens, in chequered flight,
Hither to-day the nymphs shall flee,
And Pan forsake for our delight
The tomb of Helice.

WITH A COPY OF HERRICK.

FRESH with all airs of woodland brooks
And scents of showers,
Take to your haunt of holy books
This saint of flowers.

When meadows burn with budding May,
And heaven is blue,
Before his shrine our prayers we say,—
Saint Robin true.

Love crowned with thorns is on his staff,—
Thorns of sweet-briar;
His benediction is a laugh,
Birds are his choir.

His sacred robe of white and red
Unction distils;
He hath a nimbus round his head
Of daffodils.

We two have strayed far from the noise of earth,
By heath and peak, by foam-distracted beach,
By little ancient towns of foreign speech,
By woodlands where the swinging birds made mirth,
By dusky towns, eyes in the moorland girth
Of hills, and in the solitude of each
Your lovelier soul has bent itself to teach
My soul the lore that follows the New Birth.
I think some fragment of our life must make
A green oasis in those mountain snows,
A sanguine flush across the wild white rose,
A bar of opal where the streamlets break,
Or in some valley there may bloom, who knows,
One little flower created for our sake?

TO TUSITALA IN VAILIMA.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I.

CLEAREST voice in Britain's chorus,
Tusitala!
Years ago, years four-and-twenty,
Grey the cloudland drifted o'er us,
When these ears first heard you talking,
When these eyes first saw you smiling.
Years of famine, years of plenty,
Years of beckoning and beguiling,
Years of yielding, shifting, baulking,—
When the good ship *Clansman* bore us
Round the spits of Tobermory,
Glens of Voulin like a vision,
Crags of Knoidart, huge and hoary,—
We had laughed in light derision,
Had they told us, told the daring
Tusitala,
What the years' pale hands were bearing,—
Years in stately, dim division.

II.

Now the skies are pure above you,
Tusitala;
Feather'd trees bow down to love you;
Perfum'd winds from shining waters
Stir the sanguine-leav'd hibiscus
That your kingdom's dusk-ey'd daughters

Weave about their shining tresses;
Dew-fed guavas drop their viscous
Honey at the sun's caresses
Where eternal summer blesses
Your ethereal musky highlands,—
Ah! but does your heart remember,
Tusitala,
Westward in our Scotch September,
Blue against the pale sun's ember,—
That low rim of faint long islands,
Barren granite-snouted nesses,
Plunging in the dull'd Atlantic,
Where beyond Tiree one guesses
At the full tide, loud and frantic?

III.

By strange pathways God hath brought you,
Tusitala,
In strange webs of fortune caught you,
Led you by strange moods and measures
To this paradise of pleasures!
And the bodyguard that sought you
To conduct you home to glory,—
Dark the oriflammes they carried,
In the mist their cohort tarried,—
They were Languor, Pain, and Sorrow,
Tusitala!
Scarcely we endured their story
Trailing on from morn to morrow,

Such the devious road they led you,
Such the error, such the vastness,
Such the cloud that overspread you,
Under exile bow'd and banish'd,
Lost, like Moses in the fastness,
Till we almost deem'd you vanish'd.

IV.

Vanish'd? ay, that 's still the trouble,
Tusitala!
Though your tropic isle rejoices,
'T is to us an isle of Voices
Hollow like the elfin double
Cry of disembodied echoes,
Or an owlet's wicked laughter,
Or the cold and hornèd gecko's
Croaking from a ruined rafter,—
Voices these of things existing,
Yet incessantly resisting
Eyes and hands that follow after;
You are circled, as by magic,
In a surf-built palmy bubble,
Tusitala;
Fate hath chosen, but the choice is
Half delectable, half tragic,
For we hear you speak, like Moses,
And we greet you back, enchanted,
But reply 's no sooner granted,
Than the rifted cloud-land closes.

September 1894.

PLAYTHINGS.

THE streets are full of human toys,
  Wound up for threescore years;
Their springs are hungers, hopes and joys,
  And jealousies and fears.

They move their eyes, their lips, their hands;
  They are marvellously dressed;
And here my body stirs or stands,
  A plaything like the rest.

The toys are played with till they fall,
  Worn out and thrown away.
Why were they ever made at all?
  Who sits to watch the play?

THE WALL-PAPER.

WHEN I was only five years old,
My mother, who was soon to die,
Raised me with fingers soft and cold,
On high;

Until, against the parlour wall,
I reached a golden paper flower.
How proud was I, and ah! how tall,
That hour!

"This shining tulip shall be yours,
Your own, your very own," she said;
The mark that made it mine endures
In red.

I scarce could see it from the floor;
I craned to touch the scarlet sign;
No gift so precious had before
Been mine.

A paper tulip on a wall!
A boon that ownership defied!
Yet this was dearer far than all
Beside.

Real toys, real flowers that lavish love
Had strewn before me, all and each
Grew pale beside this gift above
My reach.

Ah! now that time has worked its will,
And fooled my heart, and dazed my eyes,
Delusive tulips prove me still
Unwise.

Still, still the eluding flower that glows
Above the hands that yearn and clasp
Seems brighter than the genuine rose
I grasp.

So has it been since I was born;
So will it be until I die;
Stars, the best flowers of all, adorn
The sky.

SONG FOR MUSIC.

COUNT the flashes in the surf,
  Count the crystals in the snow,
Or the blades above the turf,
  Or the dead that sleep below!
  These ye count — yet shall not know,—
While I wake or while I slumber,—
  Where my thoughts and wishes go,
What her name, and what their number.

Ask the cold and midnight sea,
  Ask the silent-falling frost,
Ask the grasses on the lea,
  Or the mad maid, passion-crost!
  They may tell of posies tost
To the waves where blossoms blow not,
  Tell of hearts that staked and lost,—
But of me and mine they know not.

RONDEL.

UNDERNEATH this tablet rest,
Grasshopper by autumn slain,
Since thine airy summer nest
Shivers under storm and rain.

Freely let it be confessed
Death and slumber bring thee gain;
Spared from winter's fret and pain,
Underneath this table rest.

Myro found thee on the plain,
Bore thee in her lawny breast,
Reared this marble tomb amain
To receive so small a guest!
Underneath this tablet rest,
Grasshopper by autumn slain.

TO A TRAVELLER.

FROM THE GREEK.

AFTER many a dusty mile,
Wanderer, linger here awhile;
Stretch your limbs in dewy grass;
Through these pines a wind shall pass
That shall cool you with its wing;
Grasshoppers shall shout and sing;
While the shepherd on the hill,
Near a fountain warbling still,
Modulates, when noon is mute,
Summer songs along his flute;
Underneath a spreading tree,
None so easy-limbed as he,
Sheltered from the dog-star's heat.

Rest; and then, on freshened feet,
You shall pass the forest through.
It is Pan that counsels you.

IN POET'S CORNER.

WHEN first the clamorous poets sang, and when
Acclaim'd by hosts of men,
While music filled with silver light and shade
Cloister and colonnade,
With pomp of catafalque and laureate crown
We laid him softly down
To sleep until the world's last morning come,
My stricken lips were dumb.

But now that all is silent round his grave,
Dim, from the glimmering nave,
And in the shadow thrown by plinth and bust
His garlands gather dust,
Here, in the hush, I feel the chords unstrung
Tighten in throat and tongue;
At last, at last, the voice comes back, — I raise
A whisper in his praise.

Thanks for the music that through thirty years
Quicken'd my pulse to tears,
The eye that colour'd Nature, the wise hand,
The brain that nobly plann'd;
Thanks for the anguish of the perfect phrase,
Tingling the blood ablaze!
Organ of God, with multitudinous swell
Of various tone, farewell!

October 1892.

BLAKE.

THEY win who never near the goal;
They run who halt on wounded feet;
Art hath its martyrs like the soul,
Its victors in defeat.

This seer's ambition soar'd too far;
He sank, on pinions backward blown;
But, tho' he touched nor sun nor star,
He made a world his own.

MADRIGAL.

SET FORTH TO BE SUNG TO THE BASS VIOL IN PRAISE OF MR. BULLEN HIS EDITION OF THE WORKS OF DR. THOMAS CAMPION.

He comes again!
The latest, not the least desired!
Too long, in mouldering tomes retired,
We sought in vain
Those breathing airs
Which, from his instrument,
Like vocal winds of perfume, blent
To soothe man's piercing cares.

Bullen, well done!
Where Campion lies in London-land,
Lulled by the thunders of the Strand,
Screened from the sun,
Surely there must
Now pass some pleasant gleam
Across his music-haunted dream
Whose brain and lute are dust.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

All pomps and gorgeous rites, all visions old,
Nursed by the ancient Spouse of Christ serene
Within the solemn precincts of her fold,
To him were dear, as angel-wings once seen
Across a ruin'd minster's spires of gold
To some old priest in exile might have been.

The gloom, the splendour of the apse, the cloud
Of streaming incense swung aloft the choir,
The murmuring organ, muffled now, now loud,
The great rose-window like a flower on fire,
The choral shout, the countless faces bowed,—
These were the plectrum and his soul the lyre.

In leaving these he wrought his instinct wrong,—
He sprang from no protesting ancestry;
Those ancient signs of worship waked his song,
And though a pagan he might feign to be,
In Arcady he never wandered long,
Nor truly loved the goddess of the sea.

His mighty spirit was an outlaw yet
In this bright garish modern life of ours;
His statue should with Gothic kings' be set,
Engarlanded with saints and carven flowers,
Or on some dim Italian altar, wet
With votive tears and sprinkled hyssop-showers.

He is made one with all the Easter fires,
With all the perfume and the rainbow-light,
His voice is mingled with the ascending choir's,
Broken and spent through traceries infinite;
Above the rich triforium, past the spires,
The answering music melts into the night.

Farewell! though time hath vanquished our desire,
We shall not be as though he had not been;
Some love of mystic thought in strange attire,
Of things unseen reflected in the seen,
Of heights towards which the sons of flesh aspire,
Shall haunt us with a yearning close and keen.

Farewell! upon the marble of his tomb
Let some great sculptor carve a knight in prayer,
Who dreams he sees the holy vision come.
Now let the night-wind pass across his hair;
Him can no more vain backward hope consume,
Nor the world vex him with her wasting care.

Easter Sunday 1882.

THÉODORE DE BANVILLE.

BALLADE.

FOR THE FUNERAL OF THE LAST OF THE JOYOUS POETS.

One ballade more before we say good-night,
O dying Muse, one mournful ballade more!
Then let the new men fall to their delight,
The Impressionist, the Decadent, a score
Of other fresh fanatics, who adore
Quaint demons, and disdain thy golden shrine;
Ah! faded goddess, thou wert held divine
When we were young! But now each laurelled head
Has fallen, and fallen the ancient glorious line;
The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

Peace, peace a moment, dolorous Ibsenite!
Pale Tolstoist, moaning from the Euxine shore!
Psychology, to dreamland take thy flight!
And, fell Heredity, forbear to pour
Drop after drop thy dose of hellebore,
For we look back to-night to ruddier wine
And gayer singing than these moans of thine!
Our skies were azure once, our roses red,
Our poets once were crowned with eglantine;
The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

With flutes and lyres and many a lovely rite
Through the mad woodland of our youth they bore

Verse, like pure ichor in a chrysolite,
Secret yet splendid, and the world forswore,
For one brief space, the mocking mask it wore.
Then failed, then fell those children of the vine,—
Sons of the sun,—and sank in slow decline;
Pulse after pulse their radiant lives were shed;
To silence we their vocal names consign;
The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

ENVOI.

Prince-jeweller, whose facet-rhymes combine
All hues that glow, all rays that shift and shine,
Farewell! thy song is sung, thy splendour fled.
No bards to Aganippe's wave incline;
The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

MELANCHOLY IN THE GARDEN.

I.

THE winds that dash these August dahlias down,
And chase the streams of light across the grass,
This solemn watery air, like clouded glass,
This perfume on the terrace bare and brown,

Are like the soundless flush of full renown
That gathers with the gathering years that pass,
And weaves for happy, glorious life, alas!
Of sorrow and of solitude a crown.

I know not what this load is on my heart,
But down these alleys I have loved so long,
Filled from old years with retrospect and song,

I wander aimless, ready to depart,
Prepared to welcome, with no frightened start,
The spectral summons and the shrouded throng.

II.

"Nature hath spent at last her shining store,
And I have lived my day," the painter said,
Who felt the arrowy throe, the dizzied head,
And laid his palette down for evermore.

Well had he learned the melancholy lore
That trains the rose, without a murmur made,
To break the clusters of her royal red,
And strew her beauty on the windy shore.

Some warning, surely, must I read to-night,
In flower and tree, in flying light and cloud;
It is the voice of Death, not near, nor loud,

But whispering from some cypress out of sight,
That bids me hearken for the feathery flight,
And draw my robe across my shoulders bowed.

EPILOGUE.

BEFORE *my tale of days is told,*
O may I watch, on reverent knees,
The Unknown Beauty once unfold
The magic of her mysteries!

Before I die, O may I see,
Clasp'd in her violet girdle, Spring;
May April breezes blow to me
Songs that the youngest poets sing!

Old eyes are dull to sights unseen,
Old ears are dull to songs unsung,
But if the heart stay warm and green,
Perchance the senses may keep young.

Howe'er it be, I will not quail
To tell the lapse of years like sand;
My faith in beauty shall not fail
Because I fail to understand.

New arts, new raptures, new desires
Will stir the new-born souls of men;
New fingers smite new-fashioned lyres,—
And O! may I be listening then.

The centaur crashes thro' the wood,
And shoots his arrow there and thus:
Shall I prefer my solitude
Because his form be fabulous?

Shall I reject the green and rose
Of opals, with their shifting flame,
Because the classic diamond glows
With lustre that is still the same?

Change is the pulse of life on earth;
The artist dies, but Art lives on;
New rhapsodies are ripe for birth
When every rhapsodist seems gone.

So, if I pray for length of days,
It is not in the barren pride
That looks behind itself, and says,
"The Past alone is deified!"

Nay, humbly, shrinkingly, in dread
Of fires too splendid to be borne,—
In expectation lest my head
Be from its Orphic shoulders torn,—

I wait, till, down the eastern sky
Muses, like Mænads in a throng,
Sweep my decayed traditions by,
In startling tones of unknown song.

So, to my days' extremity,
May I, in patience infinite,
Attend the beauty that must be,
And, though it slay me, welcome it.

The Bibelot

DISCOVERABLE in that first haunting romance written before the age of twenty — The Story of an African Farm *(1883), — there has never been the least doubt in the minds of those who then read it that here began the manifestation of a Divine Fire which has since flamed up and illumined each succeeding book Olive Schreiner has given us:* Dreams *(1891),* Dream Life and Real Life *(1893),* Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland *(1897),* Woman and Labor *(1911). In this last work*[1] *— an inspired plea for the rights of woman — we are told what Lyndall, had she lived, might have seen and said:*

"Always in our dreams we hear the turn of the key that shall close the door of the last brothel; the clink of the last coin that pays for the body and soul of a woman;

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1 *I think I am not colour blind when I see in this character of the imaginary Lyndall the forerunner of the actual woman who at last found her true voice in the impassioned third section of* Woman and Labor. *It is a voice that is one with Ellen Key, Mrs. Havelock Ellis and Constance Gascoigne Hartley.*

the falling of the last wall that encloses artificially the activity of woman and divides her from man; always we picture the love of the sexes as once a dull, slow, creeping worm; then a torpid, earthly chrysalis; at last the full-winged insect, glorious in the sunshine of the future." And the culmination of the dream is that predicted from of old: "In his Apocalypse there was one who saw a new heaven and a new earth; we see a new earth; but therein dwells love — the love of comrades and co-workers." Was it not Edward Dowden who voiced in The Initiation *the ideal Lyndall never came to realise? she who "attained," dying a little while before dawn broke over the far hills of Freedom — the dawn of Justice for Woman — now and here — on Earth.*

"How came I back to earth? I know not how,
Nor what hands led me, nor what words were said.
Now all things are made mine,—joy, sorrow; now
I know my purpose deep, and can refrain;
I walk among the living, not the dead;
My sight is purged; I love and pity men."

FOR MAY:

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY:
CHAPTER XI
BY OSCAR WILDE.

LYNDALL
By
OLIVE SCHREINER.

And it was all play, and no one could tell what it had lived and worked for. A striving, and a striving, and an ending in nothing.

And I threw myself upon the earth and cried, "Earth is so small, so mean! It is not meet a soul should see Heaven and be cast out again!" And God laid His hand on me, and said, "Go back to earth: that which you seek is there."

It is never too late for the soul of a man.

OLIVE SCHREINER.

SHE was more like a princess, yes, far more like a princess, than the lady who still hung on the wall in Tant' Sannie's bedroom. So Em thought. She leaned back in the little arm-chair; she wore a grey dressing-gown, and her long hair was combed out and hung to the ground. Em, sitting before her, looked up with mingled respect and admiration.

Lyndall was tired after her long journey, and had come to her room early. Her eyes ran over the familiar objects. Strange to go away for four years, and come back, and find that the candle standing on the dressing-table still cast the shadow of an old crone's head in the corner beyond the clothes-horse. Strange that even a shadow should last longer than man! She looked about among the old familiar objects; all was there, but the old self was gone.

"What are you noticing?" asked Em.

"Nothing and everything. I thought the windows were higher. If I were you, when I get this place I should raise the walls. There is not room to breathe here; one suffocates."

"Gregory is going to make many alterations," said Em; and drawing nearer to the grey dressing-gown respectfully. "Do you like him, Lyndall? Is he not handsome?"

"He must have been a fine baby," said Lyndall, looking at the white dimity curtain that hung above the window.

Em was puzzled.

"There are some men," said Lyndall, "whom you never can believe were babies at all; and others you never see without thinking how very nice they must have looked when they wore socks and pink sashes."

Em remained silent; then she said with a little dignity, "When you know him you will love him as I do. When I compare other people with him, they seem so weak and little. *Our* hearts are so cold, our loves are mixed up with so many other things. But he—no one is worthy of his love. I am not. It is so great and pure."

"You need not make yourself unhappy on that point—your poor return for his love, my dear," said Lyndall. "A man's love is a fire of olive-wood. It leaps higher every moment; it roars, it blazes, it shoots out

red flames; it threatens to wrap you round and devour you — you who stand by like an icicle in the glow of its fierce warmth. You are self-reproached at your own chilliness and want of reciprocity. The next day, when you go to warm your hands a little, you find a few ashes! 'T is a long love and cool against a short love and hot; men, at all events, have nothing to complain of."

"You speak so because you do not know men," said Em, instantly assuming the dignity of superior knowledge so universally affected by affianced and married women in discussing man's nature with their uncontracted sisters.

"You will know them too some day, and then you will think differently," said Em, with the condescending magnanimity which superior knowledge can always afford to show to ignorance.

Lyndall's little lip quivered in a manner indicative of intense amusement. She twirled a massive ring upon her forefinger — a ring more suitable for the hand of a man, and noticeable in design — a diamond cross let into gold, with the initials "R. R." below it.

"Ah, Lyndall," Em cried, "perhaps you

are engaged yourself — that is why you smile. Yes; I am sure you are. Look at this ring!"

Lyndall drew the hand quickly from her.

"I am not in so great a hurry to put my neck beneath any man's foot; and I do not so greatly admire the crying of babies," she said, as she closed her eyes half wearily and leaned back in the chair. "There are other women glad of such work."

Em felt rebuked and ashamed. How could she take Lyndall and show her the white linen and the wreath, and the embroidery? She was quiet for a little while, and then began to talk about Trana and the old farm-servants, till she saw her companion was weary; then she rose and left her for the night. But after Em was gone Lyndall sat on, watching the old crone's face in the corner, and with a weary look, as though the whole world's weight rested on these frail young shoulders.

The next morning, Waldo, starting off before breakfast with a bag of mealies slung over his shoulder to feed the ostriches, heard a light step behind him.

"Wait for me; I am coming with you,"

said Lyndall, adding as she came up to him "If I had not gone to look for you yesterday you would not have come to greet me till now. Do you not like me any longer, Waldo?"

"Yes — but — you are changed."

It was the old clumsy, hesitating mode of speech.

"You liked the pinafores better?" she said quickly. She wore a dress of a simple cotton fabric, but very fashionably made, and on her head was a broad white hat. To Waldo she seemed superbly attired. She saw it. "My dress has changed a little," she said, "and I also; but not to you. Hang the bag over your other shoulder, that I may see your face. You say so little that if one does not look at you you are an uncomprehended cipher." Waldo changed the bag, and they walked on side by side. "You have improved," she said. "Do you know that I have sometimes wished to see you while I was away; not often, but still sometimes."

They were at the gate of the first camp now. Waldo threw over a bag of mealies, and they walked on over the dewy ground.

"Have you learnt much?" he asked her simply, remembering how she had once said, "When I come back again I shall know everything that a human being can."

She laughed.

"Are you thinking of my old boast? Yes; I have learnt something, though hardly what I expected, and not *quite* so much. In the first place, I have learnt that one of my ancestors must have been a very great fool; for they say nothing comes out in a man but one of his forefathers possessed it before him. In the second place, I have discovered that of all cursed places under the sun, where the hungriest soul can hardly pick up a few grains of knowledge, a girls' boarding-school is the worst. They are called finishing schools, and the name tells accurately what they are. They finish everything but imbecility and weakness, and that they cultivate. They are nicely adapted machines for experimenting on the question, 'Into how little space a human soul can be crushed?' I have seen some souls so compressed that they would have fitted into a small thimble, and found room to move there — wide room. A woman who has been for many years at

one of those places carries the mark of the beast on her till she dies, though she may expand a little afterwards, when she breathes in the free world."

"Were you miserable?" he asked, looking at her with quick anxiety.

"I?—no. I am never miserable and never happy. I wish I were. But I should have run away from the place on the fourth day, and hired myself to the first Boer-woman whose farm I came to, to make fire under her soap-pot, if I had to live as the rest of the drove did. Can you form an idea, Waldo, of what it must be to be shut up with cackling old women, who are without knowledge of life, without love of the beautiful, without strength, to have your soul cultured by them? It is suffocation only to breathe the air they breathe; but I made them give me room. I told them I should leave, and they knew I came there on my own account; so they gave me a bedroom without the companionship of one of those things that were having their brains slowly diluted and squeezed out of them. I did not learn music, because I had no talent; and when the drove made cushions, and

hideous flowers that the roses laugh at, and a footstool in six weeks that a machine would have made better in five minutes, I went to my room. With the money saved from such work I bought books and newspapers, and at night I sat up. I read, and epitomised what I read; and I found time to write some plays, and find out how hard it is to make your thoughts look anything but imbecile fools when you paint them with ink on paper. In the holidays I learnt a great deal more. I made acquaintances, saw a few places and many people, and some different ways of living, which is more than any books can show one. On the whole, I am not dissatisfied with my four years. I have not learnt what I expected; but I have learnt something else. What have you been doing?"

"Nothing."

"That is not possible. I shall find out by-and-by."

They still stepped on side by side over the dewy bushes. Then suddenly she turned on him.

"Don't you wish you were a woman, Waldo?"

"No," he answered readily.

She laughed.

"I thought not. Even you are too worldly-wise for that. I never met a man who did. This is a pretty ring," she said, holding out her little hand, that the morning sun might make the diamonds sparkle. "Worth fifty pounds at least. I will give it to the first man who tells me he would like to be a woman. There might be one on Robbin Island[1] who would win it perhaps, but I doubt it even there. It is delightful to be a woman; but every man thanks the Lord devoutly that he isn't one."

She drew her hat to one side to keep the sun out of her eyes as she walked. Waldo looked at her so intently that he stumbled over the bushes. Yes, this was his little Lyndall who had worn the check pinafores; he saw it now, and he walked closer beside her. They reached the next camp.

"Let us wait at this camp and watch the birds," she said, as an ostrich hen came bounding towards them, with velvety wings outstretched, while far away over the bushes

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1 Lunatics at the Cape are sent to Robbin Island.

the head of the cock was visible as he sat brooding on the eggs.

Lyndall folded her arms on the gate bar, and Waldo threw his empty bag on the wall and leaned beside her.

"I like these birds," she said; "they share each other's work, and are companions. Do you take an interest in the position of women, Waldo?"

"No."

"I thought not. No one does, unless they are in need of a subject upon which to show their wit. And as for you, from of old you can see nothing that is not separated from you by a few millions of miles, and strewed over with mystery. If women were the inhabitants of Jupiter, of whom you had happened to hear something, you would pore over us and our condition night and day; but because we are before your eyes you never look at us. You care nothing that *this* is ragged and ugly," she said, putting her little finger on his sleeve; "but you strive mightily to make an imaginary leaf on an old stick beautiful. I'm sorry you don't care for the position of women: I should have liked us to be friends; and it is

the only thing about which I think much or feel much — if, indeed, I have any feeling about anything," she added flippantly, readjusting her dainty little arms. "When I was a baby, I fancy my parents left me out in the frost one night, and I got nipped internally — it feels so!"

"I have only a few old thoughts," he said, "and I think them over and over again; always beginning where I left off. I never get any further. I am weary of them."

"Like an old hen that sits on its eggs month after month and they never come out?" she said quickly. "I am so pressed in upon by new things that, lest they should trip one another up, I have to keep forcing them back. My head swings sometimes. But this one thought stands, never goes — if I might but be one of those born in the future; then, perhaps, to be born a woman will not be to be born branded."

Waldo looked at her. It was hard to say whether she were in earnest or mocking.

"I know it is foolish. Wisdom never kicks at the iron walls it can't bring down," she said. "But we are cursed, Waldo, born cursed from the time our mothers bring us

into the world till the shrouds are put on us. Do not look at me as though I were talking nonsense. Everything has two sides — the outside that is ridiculous, and the inside that is solemn."

"I am not laughing," said the boy sedately enough; "but what curses you?"

He thought she would not reply to him, she waited so long.

"It is not what is done to us, but what is made of us," she said at last, "that wrongs us. No man can be really injured but by what modifies himself. We all enter the world little plastic beings, with so much natural force, perhaps, but for the rest — blank; and the world tells us what we are to be, and shapes us by the ends it sets before us. To you it says — *Work;* and to us it says — *Seem!* To you it says — As you approximate to man's highest ideal of God, as your arm is strong and your knowledge great, and the power to labour is with you, so you shall gain all that human heart desires. To us it says — Strength shall not help you, nor knowledge, nor labour. You shall gain what men gain, but by other means. And so the world makes men and women

"Look at this little chin of mine, Waldo, with the dimple in it. It is but a small part of my person; but though I had a knowledge of all things under the sun, and the wisdom to use it, and the deep loving heart of an angel, it would not stead me through life like this little chin. I can win money with it, I can win love; I can win power with it, I can win fame. What would knowledge help me? The less a woman has in her head the lighter she is for climbing. I once heard an old man say, that he never saw intellect help a woman so much as a pretty ankle; and it was the truth. They begin to shape us to our cursed end," she said, with her lips drawn in to look as though they smiled, "when we are tiny things in shoes and socks. We sit with our little feet drawn up under us in the window, and look out at the boys in their happy play. We want to go. Then a loving hand is laid on us: 'Little one, you cannot go,' they say; 'your little face will burn, and your nice white dress be spoiled.' We feel it must be for our good, it is so lovingly said; but we cannot understand; and we kneel still with one little cheek wistfully pressed

against the pane. Afterwards we go and thread blue beads, and make a string for our neck; and we go and stand before the glass. We see the complexion we were not to spoil, and the white frock, and we look into our own great eyes. Then the curse begins to act on us. It finishes its work when we are grown women, who no more look out wistfully at a more healthy life; we are contented. We fit our sphere as a Chinese woman's foot fits her shoe, exactly, as though God had made both — and yet He knows nothing of either. In some of us the shaping to our end has been quite completed. The parts we are not to use have been quite atrophied, and have even dropped off; but in others, and we are not less to be pitied, they have been weakened and left. We wear the bandages, but our limbs have not grown to them; we know that we are compressed, and chafe against them.

"But what does it help? A little bitterness, a little longing when we are young, a little futile searching for work, a little passionate striving for room for the exercise of our powers, — and then we go with the drove. A woman must march with her

regiment. In the end she must be trodden down or go with it; and if she is wise she goes.

"I see in your great eyes what you are thinking," she said, glancing at him; "I always know what the person I am talking to is thinking of. How is this woman who makes such a fuss worse off than I? I will show you by a very little example. We stand here at this gate this morning, both poor, both young, both friendless; there is not much to choose between us. Let us turn away just as we are, to make our way in life. This evening you will come to a farmer's house. The farmer, albeit you come alone and on foot, will give you a pipe of tobacco and a cup of coffee and a bed. If he has no dam to build and no child to teach, to-morrow you can go on your way with a friendly greeting of the hand. I, if I come to the same place to-night, will have strange questions asked me, strange glances cast on me. The Boer-wife will shake her head and give me food to eat with the Kaffirs, and a right to sleep with the dogs. That would be the first step in our progress — a very little one, but every step to the end

would repeat it. We were equals once when we lay new-born babes on our nurse's knees. We will be equals again when they tie up our jaws for the last sleep."

Waldo looked in wonder at the little quivering face; it was a glimpse into a world of passion and feeling wholly new to him.

"Mark you," she said, "we have always this advantage over you — we can at any time step into ease and competence, where you must labour patiently for it. A little weeping, a little wheedling, a little self-degradation, a little careful use of our advantages, and then some man will say — 'Come, be my wife!' With good looks and youth marriage is easy to attain. There are men enough; but a woman who has sold herself, even for a ring and a new name, need hold her skirt aside for no creature in the street. They both earn their bread in one way. Marriage for love is the beautifulest external symbol of the union of souls; marriage without it is the uncleanliest traffic that defiles the world." She ran her little finger savagely along the topmost bar, shaking off the dozen little dew-drops that still

hung there. "And they tell us we have men's chivalrous attention!" she cried. "When we ask to be doctors, lawyers, law-makers, anything but ill-paid drudges, they say,—No; but you have men's chivalrous attention; now think of that and be satisfied! What would you do without it?"

The bitter little silvery laugh, so seldom heard, rang out across the bushes. She bit her little teeth together.

"I was coming up in Cobb and Co.'s the other day. At a little wayside hotel we had to change the large coach for a small one. We were ten passengers, eight men and two women. As I sat in the house the gentlemen came and whispered to me, 'There is not room for all in the new coach, take your seat quickly.' We hurried out, and they gave me the best seat, and covered me with rugs, because it was drizzling. Then the last passenger came running up to the coach—an old woman with a wonderful bonnet, and a black shawl pinned with a yellow pin.

"'There is no room,' they said; 'you must wait till next week's coach takes you up;' but she climbed on to the step, and held on at the window with both hands.

"'My son-in-law is ill, and I must go and see him,' she said.

"'My good woman,' said one, 'I am really exceedingly sorry that your son-in-law is ill; but there is absolutely no room for you here.'

"'You had better get down,' said another, 'or the wheel will catch you.'

"I got up to give her my place.

"'Oh, no, no!' they cried, 'we will not allow that.'

"'I will rather kneel,' said one, and he crouched down at my feet; so the woman came in.

"There were nine of us in that coach, and only one showed chivalrous attention — and that was a woman to a woman.

"I shall be old and ugly too one day, and I shall look for men's chivalrous help, but I shall not find it.

"The bees are very attentive to the flowers till their honey is done, and then they fly over them. I don't know if the flowers feel grateful to the bees; they are great fools if they do."

"But some women," said Waldo, speaking as though the words forced themselves

from him at that moment, "some women have power."

She lifted her beautiful eyes to his face.

"Power! Did you ever hear of men being asked whether other souls should have power or not? It is born in them. You may dam up the fountain of water, and make it a stagnant marsh, or you may let it run free and do its work; but *you* cannot say whether it shall be there; *it is there.* And it will act, if not openly for good, then covertly for evil; but it will act. If Goethe had been stolen away a child, and reared in a robber horde in the depths of a German forest, do you think the world would have had 'Faust' and 'Iphegenie'? But he would have been Goethe still — stronger, wiser than his fellows. At night, round their watch-fire, he would have chanted wild songs of rapine and murder, till the dark faces about him were moved and trembled. His songs would have echoed on from father to son, and nerved the heart and arm — for evil. Do you think if Napoleon had been born a woman that he would have been contented to give small tea-parties and talk small scandal? He would have risen; but

the world would not have heard of him as it hears of him now — a man great and kingly, with all his sins; he would have left one of those names that stain the leaf of every history — the names of women, who, having power, but being denied the right to exercise it openly, rule in the dark, covertly, and by stealth, through the men whose passions they feed on and by whom they climb.

"Power!" she said suddenly, smiting her little hand upon the rail. "Yes, we have power; and since we are not to expend it in tunneling mountains, nor healing diseases, nor making laws, nor money, nor on any extraneous object, we expend it on *you*. You are our goods, our merchandise, our material for operating on; we buy you, we sell you, we make fools of you, we act the wily old Jew with you, we keep six of you crawling to our little feet, and praying only for a touch of our little hand; and they say truly, there was never an ache or pain or a broken heart but a woman was at the bottom of it. We are not to study law, nor science, nor art, so we study you. There is never a nerve or fibre in your man's nature but we know it. We keep six of you dancing in the

palm of one little hand," she said, balancing her outstretched arm gracefully, as though tiny beings disported themselves in its palm. "There — we throw you away, and you sink to the Devil," she said, folding her arms composedly. "There was never a man who said one word for woman but he said two for man, and three for the whole human race."

She watched the bird pecking up the last yellow grains; but Waldo looked only at her.

When she spoke again it was very measuredly.

"They bring weighty arguments against us when we ask for the perfect freedom of woman," she said; "but, when you come to the objections, they are like pumpkin devils with candles inside, hollow, and can't bite. They say that women do not wish for the sphere and freedom we ask for them, and would not use it!

"If the bird *does* like its cage, and *does* like its sugar, and will not leave it, why keep the door so very carefully shut? Why not open it, only a little? Do they know, there is many a bird will not break its wings against the bars, but would fly if the doors

were open." She knit her forehead, and leaned further over the bars.

"Then they say, 'If the women have the liberty you ask for, they will be found in positions for which they are not fitted!' If two men climb one ladder, did you ever see the weakest anywhere but at the foot? The surest sign of fitness is success. The weakest never wins but where there is handicapping. Nature left to herself will as beautifully apportion a man's work to his capacities as long ages ago she graduated the colours on the bird's breast. If we are not fit you give us to no purpose the right to labour; the work will fall out of our hands into those that are wiser."

She talked more rapidly as she went on, as one talks of that over which they have brooded long, and which lies near their hearts.

Waldo watched her intently.

"They say women have one great and noble work left them, and they do it ill.—That is true; they do it execrably. It is the work that demands the broadest culture, and they have not even the narrowest. The lawyer may see no deeper than his law-

books, and the chemist see no further than the windows of his laboratory, and they may do their work well. But the woman who does woman's work needs a many-sided, multiform culture; the heights and depths of human life must not be beyond the reach of her vision; she must have knowledge of men and things in many states, a wide catholicity of sympathy, the strength that springs from knowledge, and the magnanimity which springs from strength. *We* bear the world, and *we* make it. The souls of little children are marvellously delicate and tender things, and keep for ever the shadow that first falls on them, and that is the mother's, or at best a woman's. There was never a great man who had not a great mother — it is hardly an exaggeration. The first six years of our life make us; all that is added later is veneer; and yet some say, if a woman can cook a dinner or dress herself well she has culture enough.

"The mightiest and noblest of human work is given to us, and we do it ill. Send a navvie to work into an artist's studio, and see what you will find there! And yet, thank God, we have this work," she added

quickly: "it is the one window through which we see into the great world of earnest labour. The meanest girl who dances and dresses becomes something higher when her children look up into her face and ask her questions. It is the only education we have and which they cannot take from us."

She smiled slightly; "They say that we complain of woman's being compelled to look upon marriage as a profession; but that she is free to enter upon it or leave it as she pleases.

"Yes — and a cat set afloat in a pond is free to sit in the tub till it dies there, it is under no obligation to wet its feet; and a drowning man may catch at a straw or not, just as he likes — it is a glorious liberty! Let any man think for five minutes of what old maidenhood means to a woman — and then let him be silent. Is it easy to bear through life a name that in itself signifies defeat? to dwell, as nine out of ten unmarried women must, under the finger of another woman? Is it easy to look forward to an old age without honour, without the reward of useful labour, without love? I wonder

how many men there are who would give up everything that is dear in life for the sake of maintaining a high ideal purity."

She laughed a little laugh that was clear without being pleasant. "And then, when they have no other argument against us, they say — 'Go on; but when you have made women what you wish, and her children inherit her culture, you will defeat yourself. Man will gradually become extinct from excess of intellect, the passions which replenish the race will die.' Fools!" she said, curling her pretty lip. "A Hottentot sits at the road-side and feeds on a rotten bone he has found there, and takes out his bottle of Cape-smoke and swills at it, and grunts with satisfaction; and the cultured child of the nineteenth century sits in his arm-chair, and sips choice wines with the lip of a connoisseur, and tastes delicate dishes with a delicate palate, and with a satisfaction of which the Hottentot knows nothing. Heavy jaw and sloping forehead — all have gone with increasing intellect; but the animal appetites are there still — refined, discriminative, but immeasurably intensified. Fools! Before men forgave or worshipped, while

they still were weak on their hind legs, did they not eat and drink, and fight for wives? When all the later additions to humanity have vanished, will not the foundation on which they are built remain?"

She was silent then for a while, and said somewhat dreamily, more as though speaking to herself than to him —

"They ask, What will you gain, even if man does not become extinct? — you will have brought justice and equality on to the earth, and sent love from it. When men and women are equals they will love no more. Your highly-cultured women will not be lovable, will not love.

"Do they see nothing, understand nothing? It is Tant' Sannie who buries husbands one after another, and folds her hands resignedly, — 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord,' — and she looks for another. It is the hard-headed, deep thinker who, when the wife who has thought and worked with him goes, can find no rest, and lingers near her till he finds sleep beside her.

"A great soul draws and is drawn with a more fierce intensity than any small one.

By every inch we grow in intellectual height our love strikes down its roots deeper, and spreads out its arms wider. It is for love's sake yet more than for any other that we look for that new time." She had leaned her head against the stones, and watched with her sad, soft eyes the retreating bird. "Then when that time comes," she said lowly, "when love is no more bought or sold, when it is not a means of making bread, when each woman's life is filled with earnest, independent labour, then love will come to her, a strange sudden sweetness breaking in upon her earnest work; not sought for, but found. Then, but not now ——"

Waldo waited for her to finish the sentence, but she seemed to have forgotten him.

"Lyndall," he said, putting his hand upon her — she started — "if you think that that new time will be so great, so good, you who speak so easily ——"

She interrupted him.

"Speak! speak!" she said; "the difficulty is not to speak; the difficulty is to keep silence."

"But why do you not try to bring that time?" he said with pitiful simplicity.

"When you speak I believe all you say; other people would listen to you also."

"I am not so sure of that," she said with a smile.

Then over the small face came the weary look it had worn last night as it watched the shadow in the corner. Ah, so weary!

"I, Waldo, I?" she said. "I will do nothing good for myself, nothing for the world, till someone wakes me. I am asleep, swathed, shut up in self; till I have been delivered I will deliver no one."

He looked at her wondering, but she was not looking at him.

"To see the good and the beautiful," she said, "and to have no strength to live it, is only to be Moses on the mountain of Nebo, with the land at your feet and no power to enter. It would be better not to see it. Come," she said, looking up into his face, and seeing its uncomprehending expression, "let us go, it is getting late. Doss is anxious for his breakfast also," she added, wheeling round and calling to the dog, who was endeavouring to unearth a mole, an occupation to which he had been zealously addicted from the third month, but in which he had

never on any single occasion proved successful.

Waldo shouldered his bag, and Lyndall walked on before in silence, with the dog close to her side. Perhaps she thought of the narrowness of the limits within which a human soul may speak and be understood by its nearest of mental kin, of how soon it reaches that solitary land of the individual experience, in which no fellow-footfall is ever heard. Whatever her thoughts may have been, she was soon interrupted. Waldo came close to her, and standing still, produced with awkwardness from his breast-pocket a small carved box.

"I made it for you," he said, holding it out.

"I like it," she said, examining it carefully.

The workmanship was better than that of the grave-post. The flowers that covered it were delicate, and here and there small conical protuberances were let in among them. She turned it round critically. Waldo bent over it lovingly.

"There is one strange thing about it," he said earnestly, putting a finger on one little pyramid. "I made it without these, and I felt something was wrong; I tried many

changes, and at last I let these in, and then it was right. But why was it? They are not beautiful in themselves."

"They relieve the monotony of the smooth leaves, I suppose."

He shook his head as over a weighty matter.

"The sky is monotonous," he said, "when it is blue, and yet it is beautiful. I have thought of that often; but it is not monotony and it is not variety makes beauty. What is it? The sky, and your face, and this box — the same thing is in them all, only more in the sky and in your face. But what is it?"

She smiled.

"So you are at your old work still. Why, why, why? What is the reason? It is enough for me," she said, "if I find out what is beautiful and what is ugly, what is real and what is not. Why it is there, and over the final cause of things in general, I don't trouble myself; there must be one, but what is it to me? If I howl to all eternity I shall never get hold of it; and if I did I might be no better off. But you Germans are born with an aptitude for burrowing; you can't

help yourselves. You must sniff after reasons, just as that dog must after a mole. He knows perfectly well he will never catch it, but he 's under the imperative necessity of digging for it."

"But he *might* find it."

"*Might!* — but he never has and never will. Life is too short to run after mights; we must have certainties."

She tucked the box under her arm and was about to walk on, when Gregory Rose, with shining spurs, an ostrich feather in his hat, and a silver-headed whip, careered past. He bowed gallantly as he went by. They waited till the dust of the horse's hoofs had laid itself.

"There," said Lyndall, "goes a true woman — one born for the sphere that some women have to fill without being born for it. How happy he would be sewing frills into his little girl's frocks, and how pretty he would look sitting in a parlour, with a rough man making love to him! Don't you think so?"

"I shall not stay here when he is master," Waldo answered, not able to connect any kind of beauty with Gregory Rose.

"I should imagine not. The rule of a

woman is tyranny; but the rule of a man-woman grinds fine. Where are you going?"

"Anywhere."

"What to do?"

"See — see everything."

"You will be disappointed."

"And were you?"

"Yes; and you will be more so. I want some things that men and the world give, you do not. If you have a few yards of earth to stand on, and a bit of blue over you, and something that you cannot see to dream about, you have all that you need, all that you know how to use. But I like to see real men. Let them be as disagreeable as they please, they are more interesting to me than flowers, or trees, or stars, or any other thing under the sun. Sometimes," she added, walking on, and shaking the dust daintily from her skirts, "when I am not too busy trying to find a new way of doing my hair that will show my little neck to better advantage, or over other work of that kind, sometimes it amuses me intensely to trace out the resemblance between one man and another: to see how Tant' Sannie and I, you and Bonaparte, St. Simon on his pillar,

and the Emperor dining off larks' tongues, are one and the same compound, merely mixed in different proportions. What is microscopic in one is largely developed in another; what is a rudimentary in one man is an active organ in another; but all things are in all men, and one soul is the model of all. We shall find nothing new in human nature after we have once carefully dissected and analysed the one being we ever shall truly know — ourself. The Kaffir girl threw some coffee on my arm in bed this morning; I felt displeased, but said nothing. Tant' Sannie would have thrown the saucer at her and sworn for an hour; but the feeling would be the same irritated displeasure. If a huge animated stomach like Bonaparte were put under a glass by a skilful mental microscopist, even he would be found to have an embryonic doubling somewhere indicative of a heart, and rudimentary buddings that might have become conscience and sincerety. — Let me take your arm, Waldo. How full you are of mealie dust. — No, never mind. It will brush off. — And sometimes what is more amusing still than tracing the likeness between man and man,

is to trace the analogy there always is between the progress and development of one individual and of a whole nation; or again, between a single nation and the entire human race. It is pleasant when it dawns on you that the one is just the other written out in large letters; and very odd to find all the little follies and virtues, and developments and retrogressions, written out in the big world's book that you find in your little internal self. It is the most amusing thing I know of; but of course, being a woman, I have not often time for such amusements. Professional duties always first, you know. It takes a great deal of time and thought always to look perfectly exquisite, even for a pretty woman. Is the old buggy still in existence, Waldo?"

"Yes; but the harness is broken."

"Well, I wish you would mend it. You must teach me to drive. I must learn something while I am here. I got the Hottentot girl to show me how to make 'sarsarties' this morning; and Tant' Sannie is going to teach me to make 'kapjes.' I will come and sit with you this afternoon while you mend the harness."

"Thank you."

"No, don't thank me; I come for my own pleasure. I never find any one I can talk to. Women bore me, and men, I talk so to — 'Going to the ball this evening? — Nice little dog that of yours. — Pretty little ears. — So fond of pointer pups!' — And they think me fascinating, charming! Men are like the earth and we are the moon; we turn always one side to them, and they think there is no other, because they don't see it — but there is."

They had reached the house now.

"Tell me when you set to work," she said, and walked towards the door.

Waldo stood to look after her, and Doss stood at his side, a look of painful uncertainty depicted on his small countenance, and one little foot poised in the air. Should he stay with his master or go? He looked at the figure with the wide straw hat moving towards the house, and he looked up at his master; then he put down the little paw and went. Waldo watched them both in at the door and then walked away alone. He was satisfied that at least his dog was with her.

The Bibelot

"IT *is poisonous, if you like, but you cannot deny that it is also perfect, and perfection is what we artists aim at.*"

"*Leave my book, I beg you, to the immortality that it deserves.*"

To the British critic of that day these utterances of Oscar Wilde must have proved exasperating in the extreme, as they were assuredly meant to be. But listen to the asininity of the Pall Mall Gazette, *ten years later, when Oscar was dead, speaking for Itself, and presumably for Time and Eternity: "nothing that he ever wrote had strength to endure"!—Ye gods! and Pater had reviewed with favor this same* Dorian Gray, *while later still Robert Buchanan was to defend it from the charge of obscenity—he of all men, who had once found it possible to hold up Rossetti's* Nuptial Sleep *sonnet as the abomination of desolation.*

First published in Lippincott's Magazine *for July, 1890,* The Picture of Dorian Gray *appeared in completed book form during April, 1891. From that time on, not without protest, it has taken its place as the one great romance of decadence written in*

the English language. "My story is an essay on decorative art." Wilde said this and further remarked, "It reacts against the crude brutality of plain realism."

All the world may read in Mr. Stuart Mason's revised edition of Oscar Wilde: Art and Morality: a record of the discussion which followed the publication of "Dorian Gray," *(London, 1912), what some portion of the world now accepts as that* tour de force *which, even at the least critical estimate, stands as one of the most wonderful "pot-boilers" ever written.*[1] *It has been translated into German, French, Italian, in fact into almost every language in Europe including Yiddish. The number of unauthorized reprints is amazing, and yet such was the fatuity of its first English*

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[1] *Mr. Werner Laurie hopes to have ready next month the long announced* Bibliography of Oscar Wilde, *by Stuart Mason, to which Mr. Robert Ross has contributed an introductory note. The work includes a complete list of Wilde's anonymous contributions to the Press, several of which are now reprinted for the first time. It contains also the unpublished scenario of the lost play,* The Cardinal of Avignon, *and the suppressed dedication to* The Ballad of Reading Gaol. *Among the illustrations are facsimiles of title-pages, original manuscripts, and unpublished cartoons of Aubrey Beardsley and Max Beerbohm. See* London Times: Literary Supplement *for April 9, 1914.*

publishers that the copyright was transferred to Charles Carrington of Paris in 1905 for a consideration of some seventy guineas!

Literary comparisons are at best invidious, but as compared with The Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde *(1886), harking back to the* Confessions of a Justified Sinner *(1824), Wilde's novel, even if inspired by Huysmans and* The Symbolistes *with hints from Balzac's* Peau de Chagrin, *is a book that will equal if it does not outlast the Scotch masterpiece.*

The latest works dealing with Wilde are undoubtedly the best.[2] *In Mr. Holbrook*

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2 *For the last word of analytic criticism see* The Influence of Pater and Matthew Arnold in the Prose-Writings of Oscar Wilde *by Ernst Bendz. Quarto. (Wrappers. Pp. 114)* Gothenburg and London, 1914. *The best* Life of Oscar Wilde *is that by Mr. R. H. Sherard (New York, Kennerley, 1906,) which "though it may not quite satisfy us on all points, still remains our chief source of information concerning the external facts of the poet's life." (Bendz, p. 7.)*

Leonard Cresswell Ingleby's Oscar Wilde *(1908) is also worth while reading but should be taken not too seriously in its critical conclusions.*

What Mr. Frank Harris in the forthcoming Oscar Wilde: His Life and Confessions *(announced over a year ago,) may have to tell, awaits the termination of an unjust sentence for alleged contempt of court.*

Jackson's The Eighteen-Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the close of the Nineteenth Century, *(New York, Kennerley, 1913,) we have a general survey of the period that would be hard to equal for sanity and insight. In* Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study *by Arthur Ransome, (New York, Kennerley, 1912,) there is that impartial survey of the man and his books which could only come after some little time had been passed over since Wilde's death on the morning of November 30, 1900.*[3] *From this volume we quote the following passage:*

"*There is little need to discuss the minutiæ of the book; to point out that its sayings occur in Wilde's plays, poems, reviews and dialogues; that it is, as it were, an epitome of his wit before and after the fact; that the eleventh chapter is a wonderful condensation of a main theme in*

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3 *It may prove of further interest to know that the suppressed portion of* De Profundis *has been reprinted in this country for copyright purposes. Fifteen copies are said to be the number issued, and we can only wonder if this was done to lock up the complete book for years to come, or if it is an honest attempt to protect the uncastrated text in the immediate future.*

Consult English Literature: 1880-1905, *by J. M. Kennedy (London, 1912), especially Pp. 59-97, for the supposed nature of this withheld information.*

'A Rebours,' like an impression of a concerto rendered by a virtuoso upon a violin. There is no need to emphasize Wilde's delight in colour and fastidious luxury, as well as in a most amusing kind of dandyism: in the opening scene the studio curtains are of tussore silk, the dust is golden that dances in the sunlight, tea is poured from a fluted Georgian urn, there is a heavy scent of roses, the blossoms of the laburnum are honey-coloured as well as honey-sweet, Lord Henry Wotton reclines on a divan of Persian saddlebags, and taps 'the toe of his patent leather boot with a tasselled ebony cane.' There is no need to point out any of these things, but they help to justify what I have already said, and to define the indefinable character of the book. Lord Henry Wotton would have liked to write 'a novel that would be as lovely as a Persian carpet, and as unreal.' Wilde tried to write it, and very nearly succeeded."

Finally if one were disposed to jocosity it would be easy to remark that Wilde was butchered to make a British holiday! How well the "haw, demme's"[4] *succeeded is*

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4 *"Wilde boldly carried the battle against the 'haw, demme's!' into their own homes." See* Poetry and Drama *for March, 1914, p. 66.*

seen in the last act of the tragedy at the Old Bailey *in May, 1895. Is it too much to believe that the would-be King of Ulster never asked more uncalled for questions than on that day of cross examination when he, as counsel for the unspeakable Queensberry, attempted to brow-beat Wilde into an admission that* Dorian Gray *was but the reflected vileness of his own life.*[5] *The judge who presided ruled out Sir Edward Carson's construction: that it was taken into consideration by the jury can never be doubted. Well, Oscar Wilde is no longer in fear of the King's writ. But the distinguished Orangeman may yet find that he, at least, is not beyond jurisdiction of the House of Commons!*

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5 *See* Oscar Wilde: Three Times Tried, [*by Stuart Mason*] *Octavo. London, n. d.*[1912].

FOR JUNE:

PRELUDE TO SONGS BEFORE SUNRISE
PRELUDE TO TRISTRAM AND ISEULT
BY ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY: CHAPTER XI

By

OSCAR WILDE.

There are a few strange books that share the magic of some names, like Cornelius Agrippa, Raymond Lully, and Paracelsus, names that possibly mean more to us before than after we have investigated the works and personalities that lie behind them. These books are mysterious and kept, like mysteries, for peculiar moods. They are not books for every day, nor even for every night. We keep them for rare moments, as we keep in a lacquer cabinet some crystal-shrined thread of subtle perfume, or some curious gem, to be a solace in a mood that does not often recur, or, perhaps, to be an instrument in its evocation. Dorian Gray, *for all its faults, is such a book. It is unbalanced; and that is a fault. It is a mosaic hurriedly made by a man who reached out in all directions and took and used in his work whatever scrap of jasper, or porphyry or broken flint was put into his hand; and that is not a virtue. But in it there is an individual essence, a private perfume, a colour whose secret has been lost. There are moods whose consciousness that essence, perfume, colour, is needed to intensify.*

OSCAR WILDE: A CRITICAL STUDY *by Arthur Ransome. (New York, Kennerley, 1912.)*

IN HONOREM DORIANI CREATORISQUE EIUS.

Benedictus sis, Oscare!
Qui me libro hoc dignare
Propter amicitias:
Modo modulans Romano
Laudes dignas Doriano,
Ago tibi gratias.

Juventutis hic formosa
Floret inter rosas rosa,
Subito dum venit mors:
Ecce Homo! ecce Deus!
Si sic modo esset meus
Genius misericors!

Amat avidus amores
Miros, miros carpit flores
Sævus pulchritudine:
Quanto anima nigrescit,
Tanto facies splendescit,
Mendax, sed quam splendide!

Hic sunt poma Sodomorum;
Hic sunt corda vitiorum;
Et peccata dulcia.
In excelsis et infernis,
Tibi sit, qui tanta cernis,
Gloriarum gloria.

LIONELLUS POETA.

All this is Latin for a thousand thanks.

This poem by Lionel Johnson is from an unpublished manuscript in the possession of Mr. Robert Ross. (*See Oscar Wilde:* Art and Morality *by Stuart Mason, London, 1912.*)

CHAPTER XI.

I.

PROEM.

His *eye fell on the yellow book that Lord Henry had sent him. What was it, he wondered. He went towards the little pearl-coloured octagonal stand, that had always looked to him like the work of some strange Egyptian bees that wrought in silver, and taking up the volume, flung himself into an arm-chair, and began to turn over the leaves. After a few minutes he became absorbed. It was the strangest book that he had ever read. It seemed to him that in exquisite raiment, and to the delicate sound of flutes, the sins of the world were passing in dumb show before him. Things that he had dimly dreamed of were suddenly made real to him. Things of which he had never dreamed were gradually revealed.*

It was a novel without a plot, and with only one character, being, indeed, simply a psychological study of a certain young Parisian, who spent his life trying to realize in the nineteenth century all the passions and modes of thought that belonged to every century except his own, and to sum up, as it were, in himself the

various moods through which the world-spirit had ever passed, loving for their mere artificiality those renunciations that men have unwisely called virtue, as much as those natural rebellions that wise men still call sin. The style in which it was written was that curious jewelled style, vivid and obscure at once, full of argot *and of archaisms, of technical expressions and of elaborate paraphrases, that characterizes the work of some of the finest artists of the French school of* Symbolistes. *There were in it metaphors as monstrous as orchids, and as subtle in colour. The life of the senses was described in the terms of mystical philosophy. One hardly knew at times whether one was reading the spiritual ecstasies of some mediæval saint or the morbid confessions of a modern sinner. It was a poisonous book. The heavy odour of incense seemed to cling about its pages and to trouble the brain. The mere cadence of the sentences, the subtle monotony of their music, so full as it was of complex refrains and movements elaborately repeated, produced in the mind of the lad, as he passed from chapter to chapter, a form of reverie, a malady of dreaming, that made him unconscious of the falling day and creeping shadows.*

II

Á REBOURS

For years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he never sought to free himself from it. He procured from Paris no less than nine large-paper copies of the first edition, and had them bound in different colours, so that they might suit his various moods and the changing fancies of a nature over which he seemed, at times, to have almost entirely lost control. The hero, the wonderful young Parisian, in whom the romantic and the scientific temperaments were so strangely blended, became to him a kind of prefiguring type of himself. And, indeed, the whole book seemed to him to contain the story of his own life, written before he had lived it.

In one point he was more fortunate than the novel's fantastic hero. He never knew —never, indeed, had any cause to know— that somewhat grotesque dread of mirrors, and polished metal surfaces, and still water, which came upon the young Parisian so early in his life, and was occasioned by the sudden

decay of a beauty that had once, apparently, been so remarkable. It was with an almost cruel joy — and perhaps in nearly every joy, as certainly in every pleasure, cruelty has its place — that he used to read the latter part of the book, with its really tragic, if somewhat over-emphasized, account of the sorrow and despair of one who had himself lost what in others, and in the world, he had most dearly valued.

For the wonderful beauty that had so fascinated Basil Hallward, and many others besides him, seemed never to leave him. Even those who had heard the most evil things against him, and from time to time strange rumours about his mode of life crept through London and became the chatter of the clubs, could not believe anything to his dishonour when they saw him. He had always the look of one who had kept himself unspotted from the world. Men who talked grossly became silent when Dorian Gray entered the room. There was something in the purity of his face that rebuked them. His mere presence seemed to recall to them the memory of the innocence that they had tarnished. They wondered how

one so charming and graceful as he was could have escaped the stain of an age that was at once sordid and sensual.

Often, on returning home from one of those mysterious and prolonged absences that gave rise to such strange conjecture among those who were his friends, or thought that they were so, he himself would creep upstairs to the locked room, open the door with the key that never left him now, and stand, with a mirror, in front of the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking now at the evil and aging face on the canvas, and now at the fair young face that laughed back at him from the polished glass. The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more enamoured of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul. He would examine with minute care, and sometimes with a monstrous and terrible delight, the hideous lines that seared the wrinkling forehead or crawled around the heavy sensual mouth, wondering sometimes which were the more horrible, the signs of sin or the signs of age. He would place his white

hands beside the coarse bloated hands of the picture, and smile. He mocked the misshapen body and the failing limbs.

There were moments, indeed, at night, when, lying sleepless in his own delicately-scented chamber, or in the sordid room of the little ill-famed tavern near the Docks, which, under an assumed name, and in disguise, it was his habit to frequent, he would think of the ruin he had brought upon his soul, with a pity that was all the more poignant because it was purely selfish. But moments such as these were rare. That curiosity about life which Lord Henry had first stirred in him, as they sat together in the garden of their friend, seemed to increase with gratification. The more he knew, the more he desired to know. He had mad hungers that grew more ravenous as he fed them.

Yet he was not really reckless, at any rate in his relations to society. Once or twice every month during the winter, and on each Wednesday evening while the season lasted, he would throw open to the world his beautiful house and have the most celebrated musicians of the day to charm his guests

with the wonders of their art. His little dinners, in the settling of which Lord Henry always assisted him, were noted as much for the careful selection and placing of those invited, as for the exquisite taste shown in the decoration of the table, with its subtle symphonic arrangements of exotic flowers, and embroidered cloths, and antique plate of gold and silver. Indeed, there were many, especially among the very young men, who saw, or fancied that they saw, in Dorian Gray the true realization of a type of which they had often dreamed in Eton or Oxford days, a type that was to combine something of the real culture of the scholar with all the grace and distinction and perfect manner of a citizen of the world. To them he seemed to be of the company of those whom Dante describes as having sought to "make themselves perfect by the worship of beauty." Like Gautier, he was one for whom "the visible world existed."

And, certainly, to him Life itself was the first, the greatest, of the arts, and for it all the other arts seemed to be but a preparation. Fashion, by which what is really fantastic becomes for a moment universal, and Dandy-

ism, which, in its own way, is an attempt to assert the absolute modernity of beauty, had, of course, their fascination for him. His mode of dressing, and the particular styles that from time to time he affected, had their marked influence on the young exquisites of the Mayfair balls and Pall Mall club windows, who copied him in everything that he did, and tried to reproduce the accidental charm of his graceful, though to him only half-serious, fopperies.

For, while he was but too ready to accept the position that was almost immediately offered to him on his coming of age, and found, indeed, a subtle pleasure in the thought that he might really become to the London of his own day what to imperial Neronian Rome the author of the "Satyricon" once had been, yet in his inmost heart he desired to be something more than a mere *arbiter elegantiarum*, to be consulted on the wearing of a jewel, or the knotting of a necktie, or the conduct of a cane. He sought to elaborate some new scheme of life that would have its reasoned philosophy and its ordered principles, and find in the spiritualizing of the senses its highest realization.

The worship of the senses has often, and with much justice, been decried, men feeling a natural instinct of terror about passions and sensations that seem stronger than themselves, and that they are conscious of sharing with the less highly organized forms of existence. But it appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they had remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality, of which a fine instinct for beauty was to be the dominant characteristic. As he looked back upon man moving through History, he was haunted by a feeling of loss. So much had been surrendered! and to such little purpose! There had been mad wilful rejections, monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial, whose origin was fear, and whose result was a degradation infinitely more terrible than that fancied degradation from which, in their ignorance, they had sought to escape, Nature, in her wonderful irony, driving out the anchorite to feed with the wild animals of the desert and

giving to the hermit the beasts of the field as his companions.

Yes: there was to be, as Lord Henry had prophesied, a new Hedonism that was to recreate life, and to save it from that harsh, uncomely puritanism that is having, in our own day, its curious revival. It was to have its service of the intellect, certainly; yet, it was never to accept any theory or system that would involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience. Its aim, indeed, was to be experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they might be. Of the asceticism that deadens the senses, as of the vulgar profligacy that dulls them, it was to know nothing. But it was to teach man to concentrate himself upon the moments of a life that is itself but a moment.

There are few of us who have not sometimes wakened before dawn, either after one of those dreamless nights that make us almost enamoured of death, or one of those nights of horror and misshapen joy, when through the chambers of the brain sweep phantoms more terrible than reality itself, and instinct with that vivid life that lurks in

all grotesques, and that lends to Gothic art its enduring vitality, this art being, one might fancy, especially the art of those whose minds have been troubled with the malady of reverie. Gradually white fingers creep through the curtains, and they appear to tremble. In black fantastic shapes, dumb shadows crawl into the corners of the room, and crouch there. Outside, there is the stirring of birds among the leaves, or the sound of men going forth to their work, or the sigh and sob of the wind coming down from the hills, and wandering round the silent house, as though it feared to wake the sleepers, and yet must needs call forth sleep from her purple cave. Veil after veil of thin dusky gauze is lifted, and by degrees the forms and colours of things are restored to them, and we watch the dawn remaking the world in its antique pattern. The wan mirrors get back their mimic life. The flameless tapers stand where we had left them, and beside them lies the half-cut book that we had been studying, or the wired flower that we had worn at the ball, or the letter that we had been afraid to read, or that we had read too often. Nothing

seems to us changed. Out of the unreal shadows of the night comes back the real life that we had known. We have to resume it where we had left off, and there steals over us a terrible sense of the necessity for the continuance of energy in the same wearisome round of stereotyped habits, or a wild longing, it may be, that our eyelids might open some morning upon a world that had been refashioned anew in the darkness for our pleasure, a world in which things would have fresh shapes and colours, and be changed, or have other secrets, a world in which the past would have little or no place, or survive, at any rate, in no conscious form of obligation or regret, the remembrance even of joy having its bitterness, and the memories of pleasure their pain.

It was the creation of such worlds as these that seemed to Dorian Gray to be the true object, or amongst the true objects, of life; and in his search for sensations that would be at once new and delightful, and possess that element of strangeness that is so essential to romance, he would often adopt certain modes of thought that he knew to be really alien to his nature, abandon himself

to their subtle influences, and then, having, as it were, caught their colour and satisfied his intellectual curiosity, leave them with that curious indifference that is not incompatible with a real ardour of temperament, and that indeed, according to certain modern psychologists, is often a condition of it.

It was rumoured of him once that he was about to join the Roman Catholic communion; and certainly the Roman ritual had always a great attraction for him. The daily sacrifice, more awful really than all the sacrifices of the antique world, stirred him as much by its superb rejection of the evidence of the senses as by the primitive simplicity of its elements and the eternal pathos of the human tragedy that it sought to symbolize. He loved to kneel down on the cold marble pavement, and watch the priest, in his stiff flowered dalmatic, slowly and with white hands moving aside the veil of the tabernacle, or raising aloft the jewelled lantern-shaped monstrance with that pallid wafer that at times, one would fain think, is indeed the "*panis cœlestis*," the bread of angels, or, robed in the garments of the Passion of Christ, breaking the Host into the

chalice, and smiting his breast for his sins. The fuming censers, that the grave boys, in their lace and scarlet, tossed into the air like great gilt flowers, had their subtle fascination for him. As he passed out, he used to look with wonder at the black confessionials, and long to sit in the dim shadow of one of them and listen to men and women whispering through the worn grating the true story of their lives.

But he never fell into the error of arresting his intellectual development by any formal acceptance of creed or system, or of mistaking, for a house in which to live, an inn that is but suitable for the sojourn of a night, or for a few hours of a night in which there are no stars and the moon is in travail. Mysticism, with its marvellous power of making common things strange to us, and the subtle antinomianism that always seems to accompany it, moved him for a season; and for a season he inclined to the materialistic doctrines of the *Darwinismus* movement in Germany, and found a curious pleasure in tracing the thoughts and passions of men to some pearly cell in the brain, or some white nerve in the body, delighting in

the conception of the absolute dependence of the spirit on certain physical conditions, morbid or healthy, normal or diseased. Yet, as has been said of him before, no theory of life seemed to him to be of any importance compared with life itself. He felt keenly conscious of how barren all intellectual speculation is when separated from action and experiment. He knew that the senses, no less than the soul, have their spiritual mysteries to reveal.

And so he would now study perfumes, and the secrets of their manufacture, distilling heavily-scented oils, and burning odorous gums from the East. He saw that there was no mood of the mind that had not its counterpart in the sensuous life, and set himself to discover their true relations, wondering what there was in frankincense that made one mystical, and in ambergris that stirred one's passions, and in violets that woke the memory of dead romances, and in musk that troubled the brain, and in champak that stained the imagination; and seeking often to elaborate a real psychology of perfumes, and to estimate the several influences of sweet-smelling roots, and scented

pollen-laden flowers, of aromatic balms, and of dark and fragrant woods, of spikenard that sickens, of hovenia that makes men mad, and of aloes that are said to be able to expel melancholy from the soul.

At another time he devoted himself entirely to music, and in a long latticed room, with a vermilion-and-gold ceiling and walls of olive-green lacquer, he used to give curious concerts in which mad gypsies tore wild music from little zithers, or grave yellow-shawled Tunisians plucked at the strained strings of monstrous lutes, while grinning negroes beat monotonously upon copper drums, and, crouching upon scarlet mats, slim turbaned Indians blew through long pipes of reed or brass, and charmed, or feigned to charm, great hooded snakes and horrible horned adders. The harsh intervals and shrill discords of barbaric music stirred him at times when Schubert's grace, and Chopin's beautiful sorrows, and the mighty harmonies of Beethoven himself, fell unheeded on his ear. He collected together from all parts of the world the strangest instruments that could be found, either in the tombs of dead nations or among the

few savage tribes that have survived contact with Western civilizations, and loved to touch and try them. He had the mysterious *juruparis* of the Rio Negro Indians, that women are not allowed to look at, and that even youths may not see till they have been subjected to fasting and scourging, and the earthen jars of the Peruvians that have the shrill cries of birds, and flutes of human bones such as Alfonso de Ovalle heard in Chili, and the sonorous green jaspers that are found near Cuzco and give forth a note of singular sweetness. He had painted gourds filled with pebbles that rattled when they were shaken; the long *clarin* of the Mexicans, into which the performer does not blow, but through which he inhales the air; the harsh *ture* of the Amazon tribes, that is sounded by the sentinels who sit all day long in high trees, and can be heard, it is said, at a distance of three leagues; the *teponaztli*, that has two vibrating tongues of wood, and is beaten with sticks that are smeared with an elastic gum obtained from the milky juice of plants; the *yotl*-bells of the Aztecs, that are hung in clusters like grapes; and a huge cylindrical drum, covered with the skins of

great serpents, like the one that Bernal Diaz saw when he went with Cortes into the Mexican temple, and of whose doleful sound he has left us so vivid a description. The fantastic character of these instruments fascinated him, and he felt a curious delight in the thought that Art, like Nature, has her monsters, things of bestial shape and with hideous voices. Yet, after some time, he wearied of them, and would sit in his box at the Opera, either alone or with Lord Henry, listening in rapt pleasure to "Tannhäuser," and seeing in the prelude to that great work of art a presentation of the tragedy of his own soul.

On one occasion he took up the study of jewels, and appeared at a costume ball as Anne de Joyeuse, Admiral of France, in a dress covered with five hundred and sixty pearls. This taste enthralled him for years, and, indeed, may be said never to have left him. He would often spend a whole day settling and resettling in their cases the various stones that he had collected, such as the olive-green chrysoberyl that turns red by lamplight, the cymophane with its wire-like line of silver, the pistachio-coloured peridot,

rose-pink and wine-yellow topazes, carbuncles of fiery scarlet with tremulous four-rayed stars, flame-red cinnamon-stones, orange and violet spinels, and amethysts with their alternate layers of ruby and sapphire. He loved the red gold of the sunstone, and the moonstone's pearly whiteness, and the broken rainbow of the milky opal. He procured from Amsterdam three emeralds of extraordinary size and richness of colour, and had a turquoise *de la vieille roche* that was the envy of all the connoisseurs.

He discovered wonderful stories, also, about jewels. In Alphonso's "Clericalis Disciplina" a serpent was mentioned with eyes of real jacinth, and in the romantic history of Alexander, the Conqueror of Emathia was said to have found in the vale of Jordan snakes "with collars of real emeralds growing on their backs." There was a gem in the brain of the dragon, Philostratus told us, and "by the exhibition of golden letters and a scarlet robe" the monster could be thrown into a magical sleep, and slain. According to the great alchemist, Pierre de Boniface, the diamond rendered a man invisible, and the agate of

India made him eloquent. The cornelian appeased anger, and the hyacinth provoked sleep, and the amethyst drove away the fumes of wine. The garnet cast out demons, and the hydropicus deprived the moon of her colour. The selenite waxed and waned with the moon, and the meloceus, that discovers thieves, could be affected only by the blood of kids. Leonardus Camillus had seen a white stone taken from the brain of a newly-killed toad, that was a certain antidote against poison. The bezoar, that was found in the heart of the Arabian deer, was a charm that could cure the plague. In the nests of Arabian birds was the aspilates, that, according to Democritus, kept the wearer from any danger by fire.

The King of Ceilan rode through his city with a large ruby in his hand, as the ceremony of his coronation. The gates of the palace of John the Priest were "made of sardius, with the horn of the horned snake inwrought, so that no man might bring poison within." Over the gable were "two golden apples, in which were two carbuncles," so that the gold might shine by day, and the carbuncles by night. In Lodge's strange

romance "A Margarite of America" it was stated that in the chamber of the queen one could behold "all the chaste ladies of the world, inchased out of silver, looking through fair mirrours of chrysolites, carbuncles, sapphires, and greene emeraults." Marco Polo had seen the inhabitants of Zipangu place rose-coloured pearls in the mouths of the dead. A sea-monster had been enamoured of the pearl that the diver brought to King Perozes, and had slain the thief, and mourned for seven moons over its loss. When the Huns lured the king into the great pit, he flung it away — Procopius tells the story — nor was it ever found again, though the Emperor Anastasius offered five hundredweight of gold pieces for it. The King of Malabar had shown to a certain Venetian a rosary of three hundred and four pearls, one for every god that he worshipped.

When the Duke de Valentinois, son of Alexander VI, visited Louis XII of France, his horse was loaded with gold leaves, according to Brantôme, and his cap had double rows of rubies that threw out a great light. Charles of England had ridden in stirrups hung with four hundred and twenty-

one diamonds. Richard II had a coat, valued at thirty thousand marks, which was covered with balas rubies. Hall described Henry VIII, on his way to the Tower previous to his coronation, as wearing "a jacket of raised gold, the placard embroidered with diamonds and other rich stones, and a great bauderike about his neck of large balasses." The favourites of James I wore earrings of emeralds set in gold filigrane. Edward II gave to Piers Gaveston a suit of red-gold armour studded with jacinths, a collar of gold roses set with turquoise-stones, and a skull-cap *parsemé* with pearls. Henry II wore jewelled gloves reaching to the elbow, and had a hawk-glove sewn with twelve rubies and fifty-two great orients. The ducal hat of Charles the Rash, the last Duke of Burgundy of his race, was hung with pear-shaped pearls, and studded with sapphires.

How exquisite life had once been! How gorgeous in its pomp and decoration! Even to read of the luxury of the dead was wonderful.

Then he turned his attention to embroideries, and to the tapestries that performed

the office of frescoes in the chill rooms of the Northern nations of Europe. As he investigated the subject — and he always had an extraordinary faculty of becoming absolutely absorbed for the moment in whatever he took up — he was almost saddened by the reflection of the ruin that Time brought on beautiful and wonderful things. He, at any rate, had escaped that. Summer followed summer, and the yellow jonquils bloomed and died many times, and nights of horror repeated the story of their shame, but he was unchanged. No winter marred his face or stained his flower-like bloom. How different it was with material things! Where had they passed to? Where was the great crocus-coloured robe, on which the gods fought against the giants, that had been worked by brown girls for the pleasure of Athena? Where, the huge velarium that Nero had stretched across the Colosseum at Rome, that Titan sail of purple on which was represented the starry sky, and Apollo driving a chariot drawn by white gilt-reined steeds? He longed to see the curious table-napkins wrought for the Priest of the Sun, on which were displayed all the dainties and

viands that could be wanted for a feast; the mortuary cloth of King Chilperic, with its three hundred golden bees; the fantastic robes that excited the indignation of the Bishop of Pontus, and were figured with "lions, panthers, bears, dogs, forests, rocks, hunters — all, in fact, that a painter can copy from nature;" and the coat that Charles of Orleans once wore, on the sleeves of which were embroidered the verses of a song beginning "*Madame, je suis tout joyeux*," the musical accompaniment of the words being wrought in gold thread, and each note, of square shape in those days, formed with four pearls. He read of the room that was prepared at the palace at Rheims for the use of Queen Joan of Burgundy, and was decorated with "thirteen hundred and twenty-one parrots, made in broidery, and blazoned with the king's arms, and five hundred and sixty-one butterflies, whose wings were similarly ornamented with the arms of the queen, the whole worked in gold." Catherine de Médicis had a mourning-bed made for her of black velvet powdered with crescents and suns. Its curtains were of damask, with leafy wreaths and garlands, figured upon a

gold and silver ground, and fringed along the edges with broideries of pearls, and it stood in a room hung with rows of the queen's devices in cut black velvet upon cloth of silver. Louis XIV had gold embroidered caryatides fifteen feet high in his apartment. The state bed of Sobieski, King of Poland, was made of Smyrna gold brocade embroidered in turquoises with verses from the Koran. Its supports were of silver gilt, beautifully chased, and profusely set with enamelled and jewelled medallions. It had been taken from the Turkish camp before Vienna, and the standard of Mohammed had stood beneath the tremulous gilt of its canopy.

And so, for a whole year, he sought to accumulate the most exquisite specimens that he could find of textile and embroidered work, getting the dainty Delhi muslins, finely wrought with gold-thread palmates, and stitched over with iridescent beetles' wings; the Dacca gauzes, that from their transparency are known in the East as "woven air," and "running water," and "evening dew"; strange figured cloths from Java; elaborate yellow Chinese hangings;

books bound in tawny satins or fair blue silks, and wrought with *fleurs de lys*, birds, and images; veils of *lacis* worked in Hungary point; Sicilian brocades, and stiff Spanish velvets; Georgian work with its gilt coins, and Japanese *Foukousas* with their green-toned golds and their marvellously-plumaged birds.

He had a special passion, also, for ecclesiastical vestments, as indeed he had for everything connected with the service of the Church. In the long cedar chests that lined the west gallery of his house he had stored away many rare and beautiful specimens of what is really the raiment of the Bride of Christ, who must wear purple and jewels and fine linen that she may hide the pallid macerated body that is worn by the suffering that she seeks for, and wounded by self-inflicted pain. He possessed a gorgeous cope of crimson silk and gold-thread damask, figured with a repeating pattern of golden pomegranates set in six-petalled formal blossoms, beyond which on either side was the pine-apple device wrought in seed-pearls. The orphreys were divided into panels representing scenes from the life of the Virgin, and the coronation

of the Virgin was figured in coloured silks upon the hood. This was Italian work of the fifteenth century. Another cope was of green velvet, embroidered with heart-shaped groups of acanthus-leaves, from which spread long-stemmed white blossoms, the details of which were picked out with silver thread and coloured crystals. The morse bore a seraph's head in gold-thread raised work. The orphreys were woven in a diaper of red and gold silk, and were starred with medallions of many saints and martyrs, among whom was St. Sebastian. He had chasubles, also, of amber-coloured silk, and blue silk and gold brocade, and yellow silk damask and cloth of gold, figured with representations of the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ, and embroidered with lions and peacocks and other emblems; dalmatics of white satin and pink silk damask, decorated with tulips and dolphins and *fleurs de lys;* altar frontals of crimson velvet and blue linen; and many corporals, chalice-veils, and sudaria. In the mystic offices to which such things were put, there was something that quickened his imagination.

For these treasures, and everything that

he collected in his lovely house, were to be to him means of forgetfulness, modes by which he could escape, for a season, from the fear that seemed to him at times to be almost too great to be borne. Upon the walls of the lonely locked room where he had spent so much of his boyhood, he had hung with his own hands the terrible portrait whose changing features showed him the real degradation of his life, and in front of it had draped the purple-and-gold pall as a curtain. For weeks he would not go there, would forget the hideous painted thing, and get back his light heart, his wonderful joyousness, his passionate absorption in mere existence. Then, suddenly, some night he would creep out of the house, go down to dreadful places near Blue Gate Fields, and stay there, day after day, until he was driven away. On his return he would sit in front of the picture, sometimes loathing it and himself, but filled, at other times, with that pride of individualism that is half the fascination of sin, and smiling, with secret pleasure, at the misshapen shadow that had to bear the burden that should have been his own.

After a few years he could not endure to be long out of England, and gave up the villa that he had shared at Trouville with Lord Henry, as well as the little white walled-in house at Algiers where they had more than once spent the winter. He hated to be separated from the picture that was such a part of his life, and was also afraid that during his absence some one might gain access to the room, in spite of the elaborate bars that he had caused to be placed upon the door.

He was quite conscious that this would tell them nothing. It was true that the portrait still preserved, under all the foulness and ugliness of the face, its marked likeness to himself; but what could they learn from that? He would laugh at any one who tried to taunt him. He had not painted it. What was it to him how vile and full of shame it looked? Even if he told them, would they believe it?

Yet he was afraid. Sometimes when he was down at his great house in Nottinghamshire, entertaining the fashionable young men of his own rank who were his chief companions, and astounding the county by

the wanton luxury and gorgeous splendour of his mode of life, he would suddenly leave his guests and rush back to town to see that the door had not been tampered with, and that the picture was still there. What if it should be stolen? The mere thought made him cold with horror. Surely the world would know his secret then. Perhaps the world already suspected it.

For, while he fascinated many, there were not a few who distrusted him. He was very nearly blackballed at a West End club of which his birth and social position fully entitled him to become a member, and it was said that on one occasion, when he was brought by a friend into the smoking-room of the Churchill, the Duke of Berwick and another gentleman got up in a marked manner and went out. Curious stories became current about him after he had passed his twenty-fifth year. It was rumoured that he had been seen brawling with foreign sailors in a low den in the distant parts of Whitechapel, and that he consorted with thieves and coiners and knew the mysteries of their trade. His extraordinary absences became notorious, and, when he used to reappear

again in society, men would whisper to each other in corners, or pass him with a sneer, or look at him with cold searching eyes, as though they were determined to discover his secret.

Of such insolences and attempted slights he, of course, took no notice, and in the opinion of most people his frank debonnair manner, his charming boyish smile, and the infinite grace of that wonderful youth that seemed never to leave him, were in themselves a sufficient answer to the calumnies, for so they termed them, that were circulated about him. It was remarked, however, that some of those who had been most intimate with him appeared, after a time, to shun him. Women who had wildly adored him, and for his sake had braved all social censure and set convention at defiance, were seen to grow pallid with shame or horror if Dorian Gray entered the room.

Yet these whispered scandals only increased in the eyes of many, his strange and dangerous charm. His great wealth was a certain element of security. Society, civilized society at least, is never very ready to believe anything to the detriment of those

who are both rich and fascinating. It feels instinctively that manners are of more importance than morals, and, in its opinion, the highest respectability is of much less value than the possession of a good *chef*. And, after all, it is a very poor consolation to be told that the man who has given one a bad dinner, or poor wine, is irreproachable in his private life. Even the cardinal virtues cannot atone for half-cold *entrées*, as Lord Henry remarked once, in a discussion on the subject; and there is possibly a good deal to be said for his view. For the canons of good society are, or should be, the same as the canons of art. Form is absolutely essential to it. It should have the dignity of a ceremony, as well as its unreality, and should combine the insincere character of a romantic play with the wit and beauty that make such plays delightful to us. Is insincerity such a terrible thing? I think not. It is merely a method by which we can multiply our personalities.

Such, at any rate, was Dorian Gray's opinion. He used to wonder at the shallow psychology of those who conceive the Ego in man as a thing simple, permanent, reliable,

and of one essence. To him, man was a being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bore within itself strange legacies of thought and passion, and whose very flesh was tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead. He loved to stroll through the gaunt cold picture-gallery of his country house and look at the various portraits of those whose blood flowed in his veins. Here was Philip Herbert, described by Francis Osborne, in his "Memoires on the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James," as one who was "caressed by the Court for his handsome face, which kept him not long company." Was it young Herbert's life that he sometimes led? Had some strange poisonous germ crept from body to body till it had reached his own? Was it some dim sense of that ruined grace that had made him so suddenly, and almost without cause, give utterance, in Basil Hallward's studio, to the mad prayer that had so changed his life? Here, in gold-embroidered red doublet, jewelled surcoat, and gilt-edged ruff and wrist-bands, stood Sir Anthony Sherard, with his silver-and-black armour piled at his

feet. What had this man's legacy been? Had the lover of Giovanna of Naples bequeathed him some inheritance of sin and shame? Were his own actions merely the dreams that the dead man had not dared to realize? Here, from the fading canvas, smiled Lady Elizabeth Devereux, in her gauze hood, pearl stomacher and pink slashed sleeves. A flower was in her right hand, and her left clapsed an enamelled collar of white and damask roses. On a table by her side lay a mandolin and an apple. There were large green rosettes upon her little pointed shoes. He knew her life, and the strange stories that were told about her lovers. Had he something of her temperament in him? These oval heavy-lidded eyes seemed to look curiously at him. What of George Willoughby, with his powdered hair and fantastic patches? How evil he looked! The face was saturnine and swarthy, and the sensual lips seemed to be twisted with disdain. Delicate lace ruffles fell over the lean yellow hands that were so overladen with rings. He had been a macaroni of the eighteenth century, and the friend, in his youth, of Lord Farrars.

What of the second Lord Beckenham, the companion of the Prince Regent in his wildest days, and one of the witnesses at the secret marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert? How proud and handsome he was, with his chestnut curls and insolent pose! What passions had he bequeathed? The world had looked upon him as infamous. He had led the orgies at Carlton House. The star of the Garter glittered upon his breast. Beside him hung the portrait of his wife, a pallid, thin-lipped woman in black. Her blood, also, stirred within him. How curious it all seemed! And his mother with her Lady Hamilton face and her moist wine-dashed lips — he knew what he had got from her. He had got from her his beauty, and his passion for the beauty of others. She laughed at him in her loose Bacchante dress. There were vine leaves in her hair. The purple spilled from the cup she was holding. The carnations of the painting had withered, but the eyes were still wonderful in their depth and brilliancy of colour. They seemed to follow him wherever he went.

Yet one had ancestors in literature, as

well as in one's own race, nearer perhaps in type and temperament, many of them, and certainly with an influence of which one was more absolutely conscious. There were times when it appeared to Dorian Gray that the whole of history was merely the record of his own life, not as he had lived it in act and circumstance, but as his imagination had created it for him, as it had been in his brain and in his passions. He felt that he had known them all, those strange terrible figures that had passed across the stage of the world and made sin so marvellous and evil so full of subtlety. It seemed to him that in some mysterious way their lives had been his own.

The hero of the wonderful novel that had so influenced his life had himself known this curious fancy. In the seventh chapter he tells how, crowned with laurel, lest lightning might strike him, he had sat, as Tiberius, in a garden at Capri, reading the shameful books of Elephantis, while dwarfs and peacocks strutted round him and the flute-player mocked the swinger of the censer; and, as Caligula, had caroused with the green-shirted jockeys in their stables, and supped in an ivory manger with a jewel-frontleted horse;

and, as Domitian, had wandered through a corridor lined with marble mirrors, looking round with haggard eyes for the reflection of the dagger that was to end his days, and sick with that ennui, that terrible *tædium vitæ*, that comes on those to whom life denies nothing; and had peered through a clear emerald at the red shambles of the Circus, and then, in a litter of pearl and purple drawn by silver-shod mules, been carried through the Street of Pomegranates to a House of Gold, and heard men cry on Nero Cæsar as he passed by; and, as Elagabalus, had painted his face with colours, and plied the distaff among the women, and brought the Moon from Carthage, and given her in mystic marriage to the Sun.

Over and over again Dorian used to read this fantastic chapter, and the two chapters immediately following, in which, as in some curious tapestries or cunningly-wrought enamels, were pictured the awful and beautiful forms of those whom Vice and Blood and Weariness had made monstrous or mad: Filippo, Duke of Milan, who slew his wife, and painted her lips with a scarlet poison

that her lover might suck death from the dead thing he fondled; Pietro Barbi, the Venetian, known as Paul the Second, who sought in his vanity to assume the title of Formosus, and whose tiara, valued at two hundred thousand florins, was bought at the price of a terrible sin; Gian Maria Visconti, who used hounds to chase living men, and whose murdered body was covered with roses by a harlot who had loved him; the Borgia on his white horse, with Fratricide riding beside him, and his mantle stained with the blood of Perotto; Pietro Riario, the young Cardinal Archbishop of Florence, child and minion of Sixtus IV, whose beauty was equalled only by his debauchery, and who received Leonora of Aragon in a pavilion of white and crimson silk, filled with nymphs and centaurs, and gilded a boy that he might serve at the feast as Ganymede or Hylas; Ezzelin, whose melancholy could be cured only by the spectacle of death, and who had a passion for red blood, as other men have for red wine — the son of the Fiend, as was reported, and one who had cheated his father at dice when gambling with him for his own soul; Giambattista Cibo, who in mockery took

the name of Innocent, and into whose torpid veins the blood of three lads was infused by a Jewish doctor; Sigismondo Malatesta, the lover of Isotta, and the lord of Rimini, whose effigy was burned at Rome as the enemy of God and man, who strangled Polyssena with a napkin, and gave poison to Ginevra d'Este in a cup of emerald, and in honour of a shameful passion built a pagan church for Christian worship; Charles VI, who had so wildly adored his brother's wife that a leper had warned him of the insanity that was coming on him, and who, when his brain had sickened and grown strange, could only be soothed by Saracen cards painted with the images of Love and Death and Madness; and, in his trimmed jerkin and jewelled cap and acanthus-like curls, Grifonetto Baglioni, who slew Astorre with his bride, and Simonetto with his page, and whose comeliness was such that, as he lay dying in the yellow piazza of Perugia, those who had hated him could not choose but weep, and Atalanta, who had cursed him, blessed him.

There was a horrible fascination in them all. He saw them at night, and they troubled his imagination in the day. The Renaissance

knew of strange manners of poisoning — poisoning by a helmet and a lighted torch, by an embroidered glove and a jewelled fan, by a gilded pomander and by an amber chain. Dorian Gray had been poisoned by a book. There were moments when he looked on evil simply as a mode through which he could realize his conception of the beautiful.

The Bibelot

"IT *was a period of innocent archness and unimpassioned propriety, of seaside lodgings on the sands, and family life unalloyed — an enviable period of complacent satisfaction and solid domestic furniture. . . . Uncomfortable voices, it is true, had been sounding in their ears, for a period of great literature was just passing away. . . . Full in the face of this public, young Mr. Swinburne flung his* Poems and Ballads."[1]

We all know what happened. Philistia was stormed and stampeded on its ramparts. The Queen-Mother and Rosamond, (*1860*); Atalanta in Calydon, (*1865*); Chastelard, (*1865*); *and then the book that is unlike any other book of poetry before or after in English literature! In 1871,* Songs Before Sunrise *was added proof that a new and great genius had arisen. Then came* Bothwell, (*1874*); Songs of Two Nations, (*1875*); Erectheus, (*1876*); Poems and Ballads — Second Series,

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[1] *See* Essays in Freedom *by Henry W. Nevinson, (London, 1909,) p. 37, a fascinating book that deserved more than one edition.*

(*1878*); Songs of the Springtides, (*1880*); Studies in Song, (*1880*); Mary Stuart, (*1881*) *culminating in* Tristram of Lyonesse, (*1882*). *Scarcely a score of years and all these things "serenely arriving, arriving." Omitting any reference to the concurrent series of Swinburne's prose works, simply consider the marvellous music poured forth by this "mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies."*

Out of all this golden rapture of the skies, the selections chosen, coincident in composition as they are,[2] *seen as I re-read them for the purpose of leave-taking — not in my heart but only in these pages of* The Bibelot, *— to be those I shall retain longest of all. I do not say they are greatest, — when* The Triumph of Time, *when* Hesperia, *when* The Garden of Proserpine *are named who could say that? — I only say I love them best! For as I feel, in choosing these two Preludes, (and to each I have appended the triumphant note on which the finale is reached,) here I rest my case, and if no other test were to be given or*

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2 *In 1871, Swinburne contributed to* Pleasure : A Holiday Book of Prose and Verse, *the one thing collectors will ever ransack the shot-rubbish of shelf or stall to acquire :* Tristram and Iseult, Prelude of an Unfinished Poem.

demanded, here I would have Swinburne come up for judgment. With the still living Professor Saintsbury I submit that "what is most delightful of all to the true lover of poetry and literature, [is] the delight of finding out how much it is impossible to account for. . . . Among such poetry, I, for my part, rank a very large proportion of Mr. Swinburne's earlier work. . . . If it were ever going to pall upon me, I think it pretty certainly must have palled by this time." This, then, is the Poetry that enduring stays to us and the raucous Futurism that today struts and frets its little hour may be safely dismissed as of no abiding moment.

"When half-gods go, the gods arrive."

The Prelude to Songs Before Sunrise *taken solely in itself,*[3] *or, as here given in connection with the last five stanzas of the Epilogue is matchless in lyric verse and*

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3 *"The* Prelude *tells of the poet's escape from the exotic or orgiastic dreams of his younger fancy; but with the lure of the names* — Thyiades, Cotytto, Bassarid — *a gust of the old airs blows across the scene; and then, at the end, he turns again to the future and utters the public impulse of a whole era with a buoyant lyric passion that makes its own tune and flows without waste or riot and breaks into a beauty like that of the morning."* Modern Studies *by Oliver Elton, (London, 1907,) p. 218.*

impact. Not less impressive in cumulative diction stands the Invocation wherewith the Tristram *Prelude opens. Of these entire 252 lines, but one has a variant—"The light that moving has man's life for shade" which became in all subsequent editions "The light that has the living world for shade." It is well also to compare the ending of this epic of Passion that never found an earthly close:*

"But peace they have that none may gain who live,
And rest about them that no love can give,
And over them, while death and life shall be,
The light and sound and darkness of the sea,"

with the sonorous terminal lines of Morris as the sea-waves take Gudrun to their embrace:

"And their will is her will henceforward; and who
knoweth the deeps of the sea,
And the wealth of the bed of Gudrun, and the days
that yet shall be?"

So it was in 1882, that the completed Tristram of Lyonesse *appeared, and the world awakened to a masterpiece of erotic poetry, that for sheer nakedness of unashamed beauty, for superb rhythmic splendour—for an Invocation possibly the most tremendous outpouring of love lyrism made of man—forty-four verses unsurpassed and unsurpassable—not likely to find its*

equal in all the years that run! The Postlude with its exordium on Fate is no less part and parcel of the marmoreal loveliness. Swinburne, said one of his greatest admirers, the late Frederic York-Powell, "has written much, and much he has written well." Best of all, one of his latest critics has called him "a lyric lord of love." May we not cite his lines on Theophile Gautier as final words of farewell to himself:

"Mixed with the masque of death's old comedy
Though thou too pass, have here our flowers, that we
For all the flowers thou gav'st upon thee shed,
And pass not crownless to Persephone.

Blue lotus-blooms and white and rosy-red
We wind with poppies for thy silent head,
And on this margin of the sundering sea
Leave thy sweet light to rise upon the dead."

FOR JULY AND AUGUST:
SIR PETER HARPDON'S END
BY WILLIAM MORRIS.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Swinburne's collected *Poetical Works*, 6 vols. and the collected *Tragedies*, 5 vols., all in crown 8vo., have been issued by Chatto & Windus, London, 1904–1906. Of the collected prose works only the essay on *William Blake*, (1906) has yet appeared. In my own Quarto Series I have issued *Poems and Ballads*, the three series complete, 2 vols., 1902–1904, *Songs Before Sunrise*, (1901) and *Tristram of Lyonesse and Other Poems*, (1904). See Catalogue of The Mosher Books, (1913) for other titles and editions.

Those who care for bibliographical details are fortunate if they possess *A Bibliographical List of the Scarcer Works and Uncollected Writings of Algernon Charles Swinburne, by Thomas J. Wise*, London, 1897. Sm. 4to. cloth, pp. 118. Only 50 copies printed. Absolutely indispensable, though by no means complete or entirely accurate, this book supercedes any earlier volume such as R. H. Shepherd's quite worthless compilation, (1887). For the next best authority if Wise is unobtainable see *A Bibliographical List of the Writings of Algernon Charles Swinburne* [*1858–1905*,] by J. C. Thomson, Wimbledon, (1905), Octavo, Bds. Pp. VIII+48. For sale by W. T. Spencer, 27 New Oxford St., London, W. C.

See also for the best and latest description of Swinburne, *Portraits and Sketches*, by Edmund Gosse, (London, 1912). Pp. 3–58. For the latest criticism read *Algernon Charles Swinburne* by Edward Thomas, (New York, Kennerley, 1912). After all, Stedman's *Victorian Poets*, (Boston, 1887,) still retains its place, supplemented by G. E. Woodbury's *Swinburne, a Monograph*, (New York, 1905). For J. R. Lowell's onslaught on the early *Tragedies* consult his *Literary Essays*, Vol. II, p. 120.

PRELUDE TO SONGS BEFORE SUNRISE
PRELUDE TO TRISTRAM AND ISEULT
By
ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Tristram of Lyonesse *is essentially a modern poem. Herein lies its excellence. It is no mere archaic reproduction of a mediæval tale. It is an epic of human passion, viewed in its enduring elements, treated with modern subtlety and a modern sense of the paramount importance of emotion. This is felt throughout the prelude, which several years ago, at Christmas-time, appearing in an obscure annual, startled us with new melodies, and with the radiance of rhetoric sublimed to poetry. That panegyric of Love, as the presiding genius of the world's eternal year, with the procession of the heroines, regents elect by song to rule the several months, strikes the main chord of the poem. An echo in a minor key is found in the exordium on Fate to the last canto. Both passages are highly characteristic of Mr. Swinburne's reflective vein in poetry, and also of his special use of the heroic couplet. But* Tristram of Lyonesse *is not only an epic of love; it is also an epic of the sea.*

J. A. SYMONDS.

TRISTRAM OF LYONESSE followed two years after *Songs of the Springtides*, and with them represents a brilliant middle period in Swinburne's art, when, in the earlier forties of his age, he was able to combine the ardour of *Songs Before Sunrise* with the richness of the first *Poems and Ballads*. In undertaking to "rehandle the deathless legend of Tristram," he says, his aim was "simply to present that story, not diluted and debased as it has been in our own time by other hands, but undefaced by improvement and undeformed by transformation, as it was known to the age of Dante wherever the chronicles of romance found hearing, from Ercildoune to Florence; and not in the epic or romantic form of sustained and continuous narrative, but mainly through a succession of dramatic scenes or pictures with descriptive settings or backgrounds. . . ." It is not, in fact, a fresh creative work upon the foundation of the old tale, but a series of lyrical studies from it which do in fact present the main outlines in such a way as to make a prior knowledge unnecessary, but yield all their fullest savours to those who know and love the tale like the poet. Those who do not thus know and love it may think it buried deep under the inessential magnificence of the poet's enthusiasm and sympathy with each stage of the tale. He has given out of his life to make their dead life live some days of his.

EDWARD THOMAS.

I. PRELUDE.

BETWEEN the green bud and the red
Youth sat and sang by Time, and shed
From eyes and tresses flowers and tears,
From heart and spirit hopes and fears,
Upon the hollow stream whose bed
Is channelled by the foamless years;
And with the white the gold-haired head
Mixed running locks, and in Time's ears
Youth's dreams hung singing, and Time's truth
Was half not harsh in the ears of Youth.

Between the bud and the blown flower
Youth talked with joy and grief an hour,
With footless joy and wingless grief
And twin-born faith and disbelief
Who share the seasons to devour;
And long ere these made up their sheaf
Felt the winds round him shake and shower
The rose-red and the blood-red leaf,
Delight whose germ grew never grain,
And passion dyed in its own pain.

Then he stood up, and trod to dust
Fear and desire, mistrust and trust,
And dreams of bitter sleep and sweet,
And bound for sandals on his feet

Knowledge and patience of what must
  And what things may be, in the heat
And cold of years that rot and rust
  And alter; and his spirit's meat
Was freedom, and his staff was wrought
Of strength, and his cloak woven of thought.

For what has he whose will sees clear
To do with doubt and faith and fear,
  Swift hopes and slow despondencies?
  His heart is equal with the sea's
And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
  Is level to the speech of these,
And his soul communes and takes cheer
  With the actual earth's equalities,
Air, light, and night, hills, winds, and streams,
And seeks not strength from strengthless dreams.

His soul is even with the sun
Whose spirit and whose eye are one,
  Who seeks not stars by day, nor light
  And heavy heat of day by night.
Him can no God cast down, whom none
  Can lift in hope beyond the height
Of fate and nature and things done
  By the calm rule of might and right
That bids men be and bear and do,
And die beneath blind skies or blue.

To him the lights of even and morn
Speak no vain things of love or scorn,
  Fancies and passions miscreate
  By man in things dispassionate.
Nor holds he fellowship forlorn
  With souls that pray and hope and hate,
And doubt they had better not been born,
  And fain would lure or scare off fate
And charm their doomsman from their doom
And make fear dig its own false tomb.

He builds not half of doubts and half
Of dreams his own soul's cenotaph
  Whence hopes and fears with helpless eyes,
  Wrapt loose in cast-off cerecloths, rise
And dance and wring their hands and laugh,
  And weep thin tears and sigh light sighs,
And without living lips would quaff
  The living spring in man that lies,
And drain his soul of faith and strength
It might have lived on a life's length.

He hath given himself and hath not sold
To God for heaven or man for gold,
  Or grief for comfort that it gives,
  Or joy for grief's restoratives.
He hath given himself to time, whose fold
  Shuts in the mortal flock that lives

On its plain pasture's heat and cold
And the equal year's alternatives.
Earth, heaven, and time, death, life, and he,
Endure while they shall be to be.

"Yet between death and life are hours
To flush with love and hide in flowers;
What profit save in these?" men cry:
"Ah, see, between soft earth and sky,
What only good things here are ours!"
They say, "what better wouldst thou try,
What sweeter sing of? or what powers
Serve, that will give thee ere thou die
More joy to sing and be less sad,
More heart to play and grow more glad?"

Play then and sing; we too have played,
We likewise, in that subtle shade.
We too have twisted through our hair
Such tendrils as the wild Loves wear,
And heard what mirth the Mænads made,
Till the wind blew our garlands bare
And left their roses disarrayed,
And smote the summer with strange air,
And disengirdled and discrowned
The limbs and locks that vine-wreaths bound.

We too have tracked by star-proof trees
The tempest of the Thyiades

Scare the loud night on hills that hid
The blood-feasts of the Bassarid,
Heard their song's iron cadences
Fright the wolf hungering from the kid,
Outroar the lion-throated seas,
Outchide the north-wind if it chid,
And hush the torrent-tongued ravines
With thunders of their tambourines.

But the fierce flute whose notes acclaim
Dim goddesses of fiery fame,
Cymbal and clamorous kettledrum,
Timbrels and tabrets, all are dumb
That turned the high chill air to flame;
The singing tongues of fire are numb
That called on Cotys by her name
Edonian, till they felt her come
And maddened, and her mystic face
Lightened along the streams of Thrace.

For Pleasure slumberless and pale,
And Passion with rejected veil,
Pass, and the tempest-footed throng
Of hours that follow them with song
Till their feet flag and voices fail,
And lips that were so loud so long
Learn silence, or a wearier wail;
So keen is change, and time so strong,

To weave the robes of life and rend
And weave again till life have end.

But weak is change, but strengthless time,
To take the light from heaven, or climb
  The hills of heaven with wasting feet.
  Songs they can stop that earth found meet,
But the stars keep their ageless rhyme;
  Flowers they can slay that spring thought sweet,
But the stars keep their spring sublime;
  Passions and pleasures can defeat,
Actions and agonies control,
And life and death, but not the soul.

Because man's soul is man's God still,
What wind soever waft his will
  Across the waves of day and night
  To port or shipwreck, left or right,
By shores and shoals of good and ill;
  And still its flame at mainmast height
Through the rent air that foam-flakes fill
  Sustains the indomitable light
Whence only man hath strength to steer
Or helm to handle without fear.

Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led,
  Across birth's hidden harbour-bar,
  Past youth where shoreward shallows are,

Through age that drives on toward the red
  Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
To the equal waters of the dead;
  Save his own soul he hath no star,
And sinks, except his own soul guide,
Helmless in middle turn of tide.

No blast of air or fire of sun
Puts out the light whereby we run
  With girdled loins our lamplit race,
  And each from each takes heart of grace
And spirit till his turn be done,
  And light of face from each man's face
In whom the light of trust is one;
  Since only souls that keep their place
By their own light, and watch things roll,
And stand, have light for any soul.

A little time we gain from time
To set our seasons in some chime,
  For harsh or sweet or loud or low,
  With seasons played out long ago
And souls that in their time and prime
  Took part with summer or with snow,
Lived abject lives out or sublime,
  And had their chance of seed to sow
For service or disservice done
To those days dead and this their son.

A little time that we may fill
Or with such good works or such ill
  As loose the bonds or make them strong
  Wherein all manhood suffers wrong.
By rose-hung river and light-foot rill
  There are who rest not; who think long
Till they discern as from a hill
  At the sun's hour of morning song,
Known of souls only, and those souls free,
The sacred spaces of the sea.

As one that ere a June day rise
  Makes seaward for the dawn, and tries
  The water with delighted limbs
  That taste the sweet dark sea, and swims
Right eastward under strengthening skies,
  And sees the gradual rippling rims
Of waves whence day breaks blossom-wise
  Take fire ere light peer well above,
  And laughs from all his heart with love;

And softlier swimming with raised head
Feels the full flower of morning shed
  And fluent sunrise round him rolled
  That laps and laves his body bold
With fluctuant heaven in water's stead,
  And urgent through the growing gold
Strikes, and sees all the spray flash red,
  And his soul takes the sun, and yearns
  For joy wherewith the sea's heart burns;

So the soul seeking through the dark
Heavenward, a dove without an ark,
  Transcends the unnavigable sea
  Of years that wear out memory;
So calls, a sunward-singing lark,
  In the ear of souls that should be free;

So points them toward the sun for mark
  Who steer not for the stress of waves,
  And seek strange helmsmen, and are slaves.

For if the swimmer's eastward eye
Must see no sunrise — must put by
  The hope that lifted him and led
  Once, to have light about his head,
To see beneath the clear low sky
  The green foam-whitened wave wax red
And all the morning's banner fly —
  Then, as earth's helpless hopes go down,
  Let earth's self in the dark tides drown.

Yea, if no morning must behold
Man, other than were they now cold,
  And other deeds than past deeds done,
  Nor any near or far-off sun
Salute him risen and sunlike-souled,
  Free, boundless, fearless, perfect, one,
Let man's world die like worlds of old,
  And here in heaven's sight only be
  The sole sun on the worldless sea.

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT.

I. PRELUDE.

Love, that is first and last of all things made,
The light that has the living world for shade,
The spirit that for temporal veil has on
The souls of all men woven in unison,
One fiery raiment with all lives inwrought
And lights of sunny and starry deed and thought,
And alway through new act and passion new
Shines the divine same body and beauty through,
The body spiritual of fire and light
That is to worldly noon as noon to night;
Love, that is flesh upon the spirit of man
And spirit within the flesh whence breath began;
Love, that keeps all the choir of lives in chime;
Love, that is blood within the veins of time;
That wrought the whole world without stroke of hand,
Shaping the breadth of sea, the length of land,
And with the pulse and motion of his breath
Through the great heart of the earth strikes life and death,
The sweet twain chords that make the sweet tune live
Through day and night of things alternative,
Through silence and through sound of stress and strife,
And ebb and flow of dying death and life;
Love, that sounds loud or light in all men's ears,
Whence all men's eyes take fire from sparks of tears,
That binds on all men's feet or chains or wings;
Love, that is root and fruit of terrene things;

Love, that the whole world's waters shall not drown,
The whole world's fiery forces not burn down;
Love, that what time his own hands guard his head
The whole world's wrath and strength shall not strike dead;
Love, that if once his own hands make his grave
The whole world's pity and sorrow shall not save;
Love, that for very life shall not be sold,
Nor bought nor bound with iron nor with gold;
So strong that heaven, could love bid heaven farewell,
Would turn to fruitless and unflowering hell;
So sweet that hell, to hell could love be given,
Would turn to splendid and sonorous heaven;
Love that is fire within thee and light above,
And lives by grace of nothing but of love;
Through many and lovely thoughts and much desire
Led these twain to the life of tears and fire;
Through many and lovely days and much delight
Led these twain to the lifeless life of night.

Yea, but what then? albeit all this were thus,
And soul smote soul and left it ruinous,
And love led love as eyeless men lead men,
Through chance by chance to deathward — Ah, what then?
Hath love not likewise led them further yet,
Out through the years where memories rise and set,
Some large as suns, some moon-like warm and pale,
Some starry-sighted, some through clouds that sail
Seen as red flame through spectral float of fume,
Each with the blush of its own special bloom

On the fair face of its own coloured light,
Distinguishable in all the host of night,
Divisible from all the radiant rest
And separable in splendour? Hath the best
Light of love's all, of all that burn and move,
A better heaven than heaven is? Hath not love
Made for all these their sweet particular air
To shine in, their own beams and names to bear,
Their ways to wander and their wards to keep,
Till story and song and glory and all things sleep?
Hath he not plucked from death of lovers dead
Their musical soft memories, and kept red
The rose of their remembrance in men's eyes,
The sunsets of their stories in his skies,
The blush of their dead blood in lips that speak
Of their dead lives, and in the listener's cheek
That trembles with the kindling pity lit
In gracious hearts for some sweet fever-fit,
A fiery pity enkindled of pure thought
By tales that make their honey out of nought,
The faithless faith that lives without belief
Its light life through, the griefless ghost of grief?
Yea, as warm night refashions the sere blood
In storm-struck petal or in sun-struck bud,
With tender hours and tempering dew to cure
The hunger and thirst of day's distemperature
And ravin of the dry discolouring hours,
Hath he not bid relume their flameless flowers

With summer fire and heat of lamping song,
And bid the short-lived things, long dead, live long,
And thought remake their wan funereal fames,
And the sweet shining signs of women's names
That mark the months out and the weeks anew
He moves in changeless change of seasons through
To fill the days up of his dateless year
Flame from Queen Helen to Queen Guenevere?
For first of all the sphery signs whereby
Love severs light from darkness, and most high,
In the white front of January there glows
The rose-red sign of Helen like a rose:
And gold-eyed as the shore-flower shelterless
Whereon the sharp-breathed sea blows bitterness,
A storm-star that the seafarers of love
Strain their wind-wearied eyes for glimpses of,
Shoots keen through February's grey frost and damp
The lamplike star of Hero for a lamp;
The star that Marlowe sang into our skies
With mouth of gold, and morning in his eyes;
And in clear March across the rough blue sea
The signal sapphire of Alcyone
Makes bright the blown brows of the wind-foot year;
And shining like a sunbeam-smitten tear
Full ere it fall, the fair next sign in sight
Burns opal-wise with April-coloured light
When air is quick with song and rain and flame,
My birth-month star that in love's heaven hath name

Iseult, a light of blossom and beam and shower,
My singing sign that makes the song-tree flower;
Next like a pale and burning pearl beyond
The rose-white sphere of flower-named Rosamond
Signs the sweet head of Maytime; and for June
Flares like an angered and storm-reddening moon
Her signal sphere, whose Carthaginian pyre
Shadowed her traitor's flying sail with fire;
Next, glittering as the wine-bright jacinth-stone,
A star south-risen that first to music shone,
The keen girl-star of golden Juliet bears
Light northward to the month whose forehead wears
Her name for flower upon it, and his trees
Mix their deep English song with Veronese;
And like an awful sovereign chrysolite
Burning, the supreme fire that blinds the night,
The hot gold head of Venus kissed by Mars,
A sun-flower among small sphered flowers of stars,
The light of Cleopatra fills and burns
The hollow of heaven whence ardent August yearns;
And fixed and shining as the sister-shed
Sweet tears for Phaethon disorbed and dead,
The pale bright autumn's amber-coloured sphere,
That through September sees the saddening year
As love sees change through sorrow, hath to name
Francesca's; and the star that watches flame
The embers of the harvest overgone
Is Thisbe's, slain of love in Babylon,

Set in the golden girdle of sweet signs
A blood-bright ruby; last save one light shines
An eastern wonder of sphery chrysopras,
The star that made men mad, Angelica's;
And latest named and lordliest, with a sound
Of swords and harps in heaven that ring it round,
Last love-light and last love-song of the year's,
Gleams like a glorious emerald Guenevere's.
These are the signs wherethrough the year sees move,
Full of the sun, the sun-god which is love,
A fiery body blood-red from the heart
Outward, with fire-white wings made wide apart,
That close not and unclose not, but upright
Steered without wind by their own light and might
Sweep through the flameless fire of air that rings
From heaven to heaven with thunder of wheels and wings
And antiphones of motion-moulded rhyme
Through spaces out of space and timeless time.
So shine above dead chance and conquered change
The spherèd signs, and leave without their range
Doubt and desire, and hope with fear for wife,
Pale pains, and pleasures long worn out of life.
Yea, even the shadows of them spiritless,
Through the dim door of sleep that seem to press,
Forms without form, a piteous people and blind
Men and no men, whose lamentable kind
The shadow of death and shadow of life compel
Through semblances of heaven and false-faced hell,

Through dreams of light and dreams of darkness tost
On waves innavigable, are these so lost?
Shapes that wax pale and shift in swift strange wise,
Void faces with unspeculative eyes,
Dim things that gaze and glare, dead mouths that move,
Featureless heads discrowned of hate and love,
Mockeries and masks of motion and mute breath,
Leavings of life, the superflux of death —
If these things and no more than these things be
Left when man ends or changes, who can see?
Or who can say with what more subtle sense
Their subtler natures taste in air less dense
A life less thick and palpable than ours,
Warmed with faint fires and sweetened with dead flowers
And measured by low music? how time fares
In that wan time-forgotten world of theirs,
Their pale poor world too deep for sun or star
To live in, where the eyes of Helen are,
And hers who made as God's own eyes to shine
The eyes that met them of the Florentine,
Wherein the godhead thence transfigured lit
All time for all men with the shadow of it?
Ah, and these too felt on them as God's grace
The pity and glory of this man's breathing face;
For these too, these my lovers, these my twain,
Saw Dante, saw God visible by pain,
With lips that thundered and with feet that trod
Before men's eyes incognisable God;

Saw love and wrath and light and night and fire
Live with one life and at one mouth respire,
And in one golden sound their whole soul heard
Sounding, one sweet immitigable word.

They have the night, who had like us the day;
We, whom day binds, shall have the night as they.
We, from the fetters of the light unbound,
Healed of our wound of living, shall sleep sound.
All gifts but one the jealous God may keep
From our soul's longing, one he cannot — sleep.
This, though he grudge all other grace to prayer,
This grace his closed hand cannot choose but spare.
This, though his ear be sealed to all that live,
Be it lightly given or lothly, God must give.
We, as the men whose name on earth is none,
We too shall surely pass out of the sun;
Out of the sound and eyeless light of things,
Wide as the stretch of life's time-wandering wings,
Wide as the naked world and shadowless,
And long-lived as the world's own weariness.
Us too, when all the fires of time are cold,
The heights shall hide us and the depths shall hold.
Us too, when all the tears of time are dry,
The night shall lighten from her tearless eye.
Blind is the day and eyeless all its light,
But the large unbewildered eye of night
Hath sense and speculation; and the sheer
Limitless length of lifeless life and clear,

The timeless space wherein the brief worlds move
Clothed with light life and fruitful with light love,
With hopes that threaten, and with fears that cease,
Past fear and hope, hath in it only peace.

Yet of these lives inlaid with hopes and fears,
Spun fine as fire and jewelled thick with tears,
These lives made out of loves that long since were,
Lives wrought as ours of earth and burning air,
Fugitive flame, and water of secret springs,
And clothed with joys and sorrows as with wings,
Some yet are good, if aught be good, to save
Some while from washing wreck and wrecking wave.
Was such not theirs, the twain I take, and give
Out of my life to make their dead life live
Some days of mine, and blow my living breath
Between dead lips forgotten even of death?
So many and many of old have given my twain
Love and live song and honey-hearted pain,
Whose root is sweetness and whose fruit is sweet,
So many and with such joy have tracked their feet,
What should I do to follow? yet I too,
I have the heart to follow, many or few
Be the feet gone before me; for the way,
Rose-red with remnant roses of the day
Westward, and eastward white with stars that break,
Between the green and foam is fair to take
For any sail the sea-wind steers for me
From morning into morning, sea to sea.

FATE, that was born ere spirit and flesh were made,
The fire that fills man's life with light and shade;
The power beyond all godhead which puts on
All forms of multitudinous unison,
A raiment of eternal change inwrought
With shapes and hues more subtly spun than thought,
Where all things old bear fruit of all things new
And one deep chord throbs all the music through,
The chord of change unchanging, shadow and light
Inseparable as reverberate day from night;
Fate, that of all things save the soul of man
Is lord and God since body and soul began;
Fate, that keeps all the tune of things in chime;
Fate, that breathes power upon the lips of time;
That smites and soothes with heavy and healing hand
All joys and sorrows born in life's dim land,
Till joy be found a shadow and sorrow a breath
And life no discord in the tune with death,
But all things fain alike to die and live
In pulse and lapse of tides alternative,
Through silence and through sound of peace and strife,
Till birth and death be one in sight of life;
Fate, heard and seen of no man's eyes or ears,
To no man shown through light of smiles or tears,
And moved of no man's prayer to fold its wings;
Fate, that is night and light on worldly things;

Fate, that is fire to burn and sea to drown,
Strength to build up and thunder to cast down;
Fate, shield and screen for each man's lifelong head,
And sword at last or dart that strikes it dead;
Fate, higher than heaven and deeper than the grave,
That saves and spares not, spares and doth not save;
Fate, that in gods' wise is not bought and sold
For prayer or price of penitence or gold;
Whose law shall live when life bids earth farewell,
Whose justice hath for shadows heaven and hell;
Whose judgment into no god's hand is given,
Nor is its doom not more than hell or heaven:
Fate, that is pure of love and clean of hate,
Being equal-eyed as nought may be but fate;
Through many and weary days of foiled desire
Leads life to rest where tears no more take fire;
Through many and weary dreams of quenched delight
Leads life through death past sense of day and night.

. . . . . .

So came their hour on them that were in life
Tristram and Iseult: so from love and strife
The stroke of love's own hand felt last and best
Gave them deliverance to perpetual rest.
So, crownless of the wreaths that life had wound,
They slept, with flower of tenderer comfort crowned:
From bondage and the fear of time set free,
And all the yoke of space on earth and sea

Cast as a curb for ever: nor might now
Fear and desire bid soar their souls or bow,
Lift up their hearts or break them: doubt nor grief
More now might move them, dread nor disbelief
Touch them with shadowy cold or fiery sting,
Nor sleepless languor with its weary wing,
Nor harsh estrangement, born of time's vain breath,
Nor change, a darkness deeper far than death.
And round the sleep that fell around them then
Earth lies not wrapped, nor records wrought of men
Rise up for timeless token: but their sleep
Hath round it like a raiment all the deep;
No change or gleam or gloom of sun and rain,
But all time long the might of all the main
Spread round them as round earth soft heaven is spread,
And peace more strong than death round all the dead.
For death is of an hour, and after death
Peace: nor for aught that fear or fancy saith,
Nor even for very love's own sake, shall strife
Perplex again that perfect peace with life.
And if, as men that mourn may deem or dream,
Rest happily here than there might sweeter seem,
And sleep, that lays one hand on all, more good
By some sweet grave's grace given of wold or wood
Or clear high glen or sunbright wind-worn down
Than where life thunders through the trampling town
With daylong feet and nightlong overhead,
What grave may cast such grace round any dead,

What so sublime sweet sepulchre may be
For all that life leaves mortal, as the sea?
And these, rapt forth perforce from earthly ground,
These twain the deep sea guards, and girdles round
Their sleep more deep than any sea's gulf lies,
Though changeless with the change in shifting skies,
Nor mutable with seasons: for the grave
That held them once, being weaker than a wave,
The waves long since have buried: though their tomb
Was royal that by ruth's relenting doom
Men gave them in Tintagel: for the word
Took wing which thrilled all piteous hearts that heard
The word wherethrough their lifelong lot stood shown,
And when the long sealed springs of fate were known,
The blind bright innocence of lips that quaffed
Love, and the marvel of the mastering draught,
And all the fraughtage of the fateful bark,
Loud like a child upon them wept King Mark,
Seeing round the sword's hilt which long since had fought
For Cornwall's love a scroll of writing wrought,
A scripture writ of Tristram's hand, wherein
Lay bare the sinless source of all their sin,
No choice of will, but chance and sorcerous art,
With prayer of him for pardon: and his heart
Was molten in him, wailing as he kissed
Each with the kiss of kinship — 'Had I wist,
Ye had never sinned nor died thus, nor had I
Borne in this doom that bade you sin and die

So sore a part of sorrow.' And the king
Built for their tomb a chapel bright like spring
With flower-soft wealth of branching tracery made
Fair as the frondage each fleet year sees fade,
That should not fall till many a year were done.
There slept they wedded under moon and sun
And change of stars: and through the casements came
Midnight and noon girt round with shadow and flame
To illume their grave or veil it: till at last
On these things too was doom as darkness cast:
For the strong sea hath swallowed wall and tower,
And where their limbs were laid in woful hour
For many a fathom gleams and moves and moans
The tide that sweeps above their coffined bones
In the wrecked chancel by the shivered shrine:
Nor where they sleep shall moon or sunlight shine
Nor man look down for ever: none shall say,
Here once, or here, Tristram and Iseult lay:
But peace they have that none may gain who live,
And rest about them that no love can give,
And over them, while death and life shall be,
The light and sound and darkness of the sea.

The Bibelot

"SIR Peter Harpdon's End *is an exceedingly clever little play in five scenes; but it falls as short of dramatic excellence as the monologues fall short of technical excellence in their kind.*" *Such was the opinion printed by Mr. H. Buxton Forman in* Our Living Poets: An Essay in Criticism, *(London, 1871;) an opinion now rendered obsolete by Mr. John Drinkwater, (London, 1912;) in his* William Morris: A Critical Study *which, as seen in the passages appended by us to this tragedy is the first, last, and best estimate extant concerning Morris as a dramatist. As bibliographer Mr. Forman in that indispensable volume,* The Books of William Morris, *(London, 1897,) leaves little to be desired; but as critic I think he would himself admit there was something to seek in this essay of forty odd years agone.*

That wonderful first book of verse, The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems, *(1858) containing* Sir Peter Harpdon's End, *is at last completed by the recovery of a fourth scene which Swinburne, struck by its tragic import, urged Morris to reprint.*

Of this scene the poet's daughter has availed herself, and we now have the play entire, including a few necessary corrections which have long been known but, for one reason or another, as stated by Mr. Forman, heretofore not acted upon. And so it was in this little foolscap octavo of 1858, (barely 250 pages, and 500 copies all told, whereof one-half the edition we are assured "stayed long on the publishers' shelves") that the "most memorable achievement of the volume," Sir Peter Harpdon's End, *minus the fourth scene, first saw the light of poetic day. Even so it is evident that the dramatic instinct in Morris was fully developed at the start. Professor Mackail has pointed out that for veri-similitude "the talk of Sir Peter Harpdon and his man seems transcribed from memory;" and, "it is this amazing power of realization" which stamps it as a thing apart from anything else. Again, in "the mixed lyric and dramatic method invented by him for* Sir Peter Harpdon's End *. . . its odd and fascinating use of blank verse, had in it all kinds of possibilities."*

Hence to have ended The Bibelot, *where so much else of Morris' earlier work has appeared without including the brief tragic*

windflower of his youth had proved a serious oversight; while in reserving it for our final volume the delay has been compensated in being able to remove the hiatus known to exist in the 1858 text and in all subsequent reprints, until the collected works came out in 1910. It is true The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems *was preluded by the* Oxford and Cambridge Magazine *of 1856. And it may well be mentioned that an earlier forerunner of that rare volume is found in the four numbers of* The Germ *for January–April, 1850. Copies of the first edition of* Guenevere *were still for sale when the second edition was issued by Ellis & White, (London, 1875,) and again it appeared in the ten volume* Collected Edition, *Longmans, Green & Co., 1897; also in a separate Fcap 8vo, 1900. The Kelmscott Press edition was printed in 1892.*

Later on two unauthorized editions were printed in England in 1904. One of them was a very wretched affair with illustrations; the other, in Moring's King's Poets Series *edited by Robert Steele, contained an introduction as well as notes of value. Since then Mr. Alfred Noyes has written a Preface to the* Everyman *edition of 1907. In* English Men of Letters, *(1908) he has*

produced a far better estimate of Morris; which, coupled with Mr. Drinkwater's critical essay, (1912) form excellent supplements to Professor Mackail's Life of William Morris, *first published in 1899 in octavo and reissued in Longman's* Pocket Library, *(Fcap 8vo,) in 1912.*

Finally, there remains for all time to come The Collected Works of William Morris to be issued in 24 octavo volumes under the editorship of Miss May Morris: *begun in 1910 and completed at present date of writing so far as the twentieth volume it stands as an everlasting monument to her father's memory. Simply taken as a piece of bookcraft it is superb in its utter simplicity; considered as text and commentary nothing henceforth written about Morris can be considered of permanent worth without reckoning with this splendid definitive edition.*

FOR AUGUST:

SIR PETER HARPDON'S END
BY WILLIAM MORRIS
(CONCLUDED.)

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE
BY JOHN DRINKWATER.

SIR PETER HARPDON'S END

By

WILLIAM MORRIS.

In every line that Morris wrote he was helping on earth to build that distant continuing City whose first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third a chalcedony, the fourth an emerald. There was no preciosity in his choice of the Middle Ages as his "form of style." He turned to them as world-weary men turn to their own childhood, knowing perhaps that except as a little child in glittering armour he could not enter into his Kingdom of Heaven. His abiding city was not and never could be here. His work is suffused with the eternal light of that vision of an ultimately reconciled and ransomed world to which Shelley attained and Keats was climbing when he murmured "Beauty is truth, truth beauty!"—the vision shadowed forth in sign and symbol by all the prophets of all the ages; the unconquerable and inviolable hope of mankind, that the desert and solitary place shall at last break into singing, and the wilderness blossom as the rose, and sorrow and sighing flee away.

ALFRED NOYES.

SIR PETER HARPDON'S END.

I.

In an English Castle in Poictou.

SIR PETER HARPDON, *a Gascon knight in the English service, and* JOHN CURZON, *his lieutenant.*

JOHN CURZON.

Of those three prisoners, that before you came
We took down at St. John's hard by the mill,
Two are good masons; we have tools enough,
And you have skill to set them working.

SIR PETER.

So—
What are their names?

JOHN CURZON.

Why, Jacques Aquadent,
And Peter Plombiere, but—

SIR PETER.

What colour'd hair
Has Peter now? has Jacques got bow legs?

JOHN CURZON.

Why, sir, you jest—what matters Jacques' hair,
Or Peter's legs to us?

SIR PETER.

O! John, John, John!
Throw all your mason's tools down the deep well,
Hang Peter up and Jacques; They're no good,
We shall not build, man.

JOHN CURZON (*going*).

Shall I call the guard
To hang them, sir? and yet, sir, for the tools,
We'd better keep them still; sir, fare you well.

Muttering as he goes.

What have I done that he should jape at me?
And why not build? the walls are weak enough,
And we've two masons and a heap of tools.

Goes, still muttering.

SIR PETER.

To think a man should have a lump like that
For his lieutenant! I must call him back,
Or else, as surely as St. George is dead,
He'll hang our friends the masons — here, John! John!

JOHN CURZON.

At your good service, sir.

SIR PETER.

Come now, and talk
This weighty matter out; there — we've no stone
To mend our walls with, — neither brick nor stone.

JOHN CURZON.

There is a quarry, sir, some ten miles off.

SIR PETER.

We are not strong enough to send ten men
Ten miles to fetch us stone enough to build,
In three hours' time they would be taken or slain,
The cursed Frenchmen ride abroad so thick.

JOHN CURZON.

But we can send some villaynes to get stone.

SIR PETER.

Alas! John, that we cannot bring them back,
They would go off to Clisson or Sanxere,
And tell them we were weak in walls and men,
Then down go we; for, look you, times are changed,
And now no longer does the country shake
At sound of English names; our captains fade
From off our muster-rolls. At Lusac bridge
I daresay you may even yet see the hole
That Chandos beat in dying; far in Spain
Pembroke is prisoner; Phelton prisoner here;
Manny lies buried in the Charterhouse;
Oliver Clisson turn'd these years agone;
The Captal died in prison; and, over all,
Edward the prince lies underneath the ground,
Edward the king is dead, at Westminster

The carvers smooth the curls of his long beard.
Everything goes to rack — eh! and we too.
Now, Curzon, listen; if they come, these French,
Whom have I got to lean on here, but you?
A man can die but once, will you die then,
Your brave sword in your hand, thoughts in your heart
Of all the deeds we have done here in France —
And yet may do? So God will have your soul,
Whoever has your body.

JOHN CURZON.

Why, sir, I
Will fight till the last moment, until then
Will do whate'er you tell me. Now I see
We must e'en leave the walls; well, well, perhaps
They 're stronger than I think for; pity, though!
For some few tons of stone, if Guesclin comes.

SIR PETER.

Farewell, John, pray you watch the Gascons well,
I doubt them.

JOHN CURZON.

Truly, sir, I will watch well.

Goes.

SIR PETER.

Farewell, good lump! and yet, when all is said,
'T is a good lump. Why then, if Guesclin comes;

Some dozen stones from his petrariae,
And, under shelter of his crossbows, just
An hour's steady work with pickaxes,
Then a great noise — some dozen swords and glaives
A-playing on my basnet all at once,
And little more cross purposes on earth
For me.
Now this is hard: a month ago,
And a few minutes' talk had set things right
'Twixt me and Alice; — if she had a doubt,
As (may Heaven bless her!) I scarce think she had,
'T was but their hammer, hammer in her ears,
Of "how Sir Peter fail'd at Lusac bridge:"
And "how he was grown moody of late days;"
And "how Sir Lambert" (think now!) "his dear friend,
His sweet, dear cousin, could not but confess
That Peter's talk tended towards the French,
Which he" (for instance Lambert) "was glad of,
Being" (Lambert, you see) "on the French side."
Well,
If I could but have seen her on that day,
Then, when they sent me off!
I like to think,
Although it hurts me, makes my head twist, what,
If I had seen her, what I should have said,
What she, my darling, would have said and done.
As thus perchance —
To find her sitting there,
In the window-seat, not looking well at all,

Crying perhaps, and I say quietly;
"Alice!" she looks up, chokes a sob, looks grave,
Changes from pale to red, but, ere she speaks,
Straightway I kneel down there on both my knees,
And say: "O lady, have I sinn'd, your knight?
That still you ever let me walk alone
In the rose garden, that you sing no songs
When I am by, that ever in the dance
You quietly walk away when I come near?
Now that I have you, will you go, think you?"

Ere she could answer I would speak again,
Still kneeling there.
"What! they have frighted you,
By hanging burs, and clumsily carven puppets,
Round my good name; but afterwards, my love,
I will say what this means; this moment, see!
Do I kneel here, and can you doubt me? Yea,"
(For she would put her hands upon my face,)
"Yea, that is best, yea feel, love, am I changed?"
And she would say: "Good knight, come, kiss my lips!"
And afterwards as I sat there would say:

"Please a poor silly girl by telling me
What all those things they talk of really were,
For it is true you did not help Chandos,
And true, poor love! you could not come to me
When I was in such peril."
I should say:

"I am like Balen, all things turn to blame —
I did not come to you? At Bergerath
The constable had held us close shut up,
If from the barriers I had made three steps,
I should have been but slain; at Lusac, too,
We struggled in a marish half the day,
And came too late at last: you know, my love,
How heavy men and horses are all arm'd.
All that Sir Lambert said was pure, unmix'd,
Quite groundless lies; as you can think, sweet love."

She, holding tight my hand as we sat there,
Started a little at Sir Lambert's name,
But otherwise she listen'd scarce at all
To what I said. Then with moist, weeping eyes,
And quivering lips, that scarcely let her speak,
She said, "I love you."
Other words were few,
The remnant of that hour; her hand smooth'd down
My foolish head; she kiss'd me all about
My face, and through the tangles of my beard
Her little fingers crept.

O! God, my Alice,
Not this good way: my lord but sent and said
That Lambert's sayings were taken at their worth,
Therefore that day I was to start, and keep
This hold against the French; and I am here, —
Looks out of the window.

A sprawling lonely gard with rotten walls,
And no one to bring aid if Guesclin comes,
Or any other.

There 's a pennon now!
At last.

But not the constable's, whose arms,
I wonder, does it bear? Three golden rings
On a red ground; my cousin's by the rood!
Well, I should like to kill him, certainly,
But to be kill'd by him —

A trumpet sounds.

That 's for a herald;
I doubt this does not mean assaulting yet.

Enter JOHN CURZON.

What says the herald of our cousin, sir?

JOHN CURZON.

So please you, sir, concerning your estate,
He has good will to talk with you.

SIR PETER.

Outside,
I 'll talk with him, close by the gate St. Ives.
Is he unarm'd?

JOHN CURZON.

Yea, sir, in a long gown.

SIR PETER.

Then bid them bring me hither my furr'd gown
With the long sleeves, and under it I 'll wear,
By Lambert's leave, a secret coat of mail;
And will you lend me, John, your little axe?
I mean the one with Paul wrought on the blade?
And I will carry it inside my sleeve,
Good to be ready always — you, John, go
And bid them set up many suits of arms,
Bows, archgays, lances, in the base-court, and
Yourself, from the south postern setting out,
With twenty men, be ready to break through
Their unguarded rear when I cry out "St. George!"

JOHN CURZON.

How, sir! will you attack him unawares,
And slay him unarm'd?

SIR PETER.

Trust me, John, I know
The reason why he comes here with sleeved gown,
Fit to hide axes up. So, let us go.

They go.

II.

Outside the Castle by the great gate; SIR LAMBERT *and* SIR PETER *seated; guards attending each, the rest of* SIR LAMBERT'S *men drawn up about a furlong off.*

SIR PETER.

AND if I choose to take the losing side
Still, does it hurt you?

SIR LAMBERT.

O! no hurt to me;
I see you sneering, "Why take trouble then,
Seeing you love me not?" look you, our house
(Which, taken altogether, I love much)
Had better be upon the right side now,
If, once for all, it wishes to bear rule
As such a house should: cousin, you 're too wise
To feed your hope up fat, that this fair France
Will ever draw two ways again; this side
The French, wrong-headed, all a-jar
With envious longings; and the other side
The order'd English, orderly led on
By those two Edwards through all wrong and right,
And muddling right and wrong to a thick broth
With that long stick, their strength. This is all changed,
The true French win, on either side you have
Cool-headed men, good at a tilting-match,

And good at setting battles in array,
And good at squeezing taxes at due time;
Therefore by nature we French being here
Upon our own big land—

SIR PETER *laughs aloud.*

Well Peter! well!
What makes you laugh?

SIR PETER.

Hearing you sweat to prove
All this I know so well; but you have read
The seige of Troy?

SIR LAMBERT.

O! yea, I know it well.

SIR PETER.

There! they were wrong, as wrong as men could be;
For, as I think, they found it such delight
To see fair Helen going through their town:
Yea, any little common thing she did
(As stooping to pick a flower) seem'd so strange,
So new in its great beauty, that they said;
"Here we will keep her living in this town,
Till all burns up together." And so, fought,
In a mad whirl of knowing they were wrong;
Yea, they fought well, and ever, like a man

That hangs legs off the ground by both his hands,
Over some great height, did they struggle sore,
Quite sure to slip at last; wherefore, take note
How almost all men, reading that sad siege,
Hold for the Trojans; as I did at least,
Thought Hector the best knight a long way:

Now

Why should I not do this thing that I think,
For even when I come to count the gains,
I have them my side: men will talk, you know,
(We talk of Hector, dead so long agone,)
When I am dead, of how this Peter clung
To what he thought the right; of how he died,
Perchance, at last, doing some desperate deed [1]
Few men would care do now, and this is gain
To me, as ease and money is to you,
Moreover, too, I like the straining game
Of striving well to hold up things that fall;

---

[1] In the scene between Sir Peter and Sir Lambert outside the castle, one passage in Sir Peter's longest speech is thus altered:

Now
Why should I not do this thing that I think,
For even when I come to count the gains,
I have them my side: men will talk *of us*
'Twixt talk of Hector dead so long agone;
Will talk of us long dead, and how we clung
To what we loved; perchance of how one died
Hoping for naught, doing some desperate deed. . .

See *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. xxiv.

So one becomes great; see you! in good times
All men live well together, and you, too,
Live dull and happy — happy? not so quick,
Suppose sharp thoughts begin to burn you up.
Why then, but just to fight as I do now,
A halter round my neck, would be great bliss.
O! I am well off.

Aside.

Talk, and talk, and talk,
I know this man has come to murder me,
And yet I talk still.

SIR LAMBERT.

If your side were right,
You might be, though you lost; but if I said,
"You are a traitor, being, as you are,
Born Frenchman." What are Edwards unto you,
Or Richards?

SIR PETER.

Nay, hold there, my Lambert, hold!
For fear your zeal should bring you to some harm,
Don't call me traitor.

SIR LAMBERT.

Furthermore, my knight,
Men call you slippery on your losing side,
When at Bordeaux I was ambassador,
I heard them say so, and could scarce say "Nay."

He takes hold of something in his sleeve, and rises.

SIR PETER (*rising*).

They lied — and you lie, not for the first time.
What have you got there, fumbling up your sleeve,
A stolen purse?

SIR LAMBERT.

Nay, liar in your teeth!
Dead liar too; St. Denis and St. Lambert!

Strikes at SIR PETER *with a dagger.*

SIR PETER (*striking him flatlings with his axe*).

How thief! thief! thief! so there, fair thief, so there,
St. George Guienne! glaives for the castellan!
You French, you are but dead, unless you lay
Your spears upon the earth. St. George Guienne!

Well done, John Curzon, how he has them now.

III.

In the Castle.

JOHN CURZON.

WHAT shall we do with all these prisoners, sir?

SIR PETER.

Why put them all to ransom, those that can
Pay anything, but not too light though, John,
Seeing we have them on the hip: for those
That have no money, that being certified,
Why turn them out of doors before they spy;
But bring Sir Lambert guarded unto me.

JOHN CURZON.

I will, fair sir.

He goes.

SIR PETER.

I do not wish to kill him,
Although I think I ought; he shall go mark'd,
By all the saints, though!

Enter LAMBERT *guarded.*

Now, Sir Lambert, now!
What sort of death do you expect to get,
Being taken this way?

SIR LAMBERT.

Cousin! cousin! think!
I am your own blood; may God pardon me!
I am not fit to die; if you knew all,
All I have done since I was young and good.
O! you would give me yet another chance,
As God would, that I might wash all clear out,
By serving you and Him. Let me go now!
And I will pay you down more golden crowns
Of ransom than the king would!

SIR PETER.

Well, stand back,
And do not touch me! No, you shall not die,
Nor yet pay ransom. You, John Curzon, cause
Some carpenters to build a scaffold, high,
Outside the gate; when it is built, sound out
To all good folks, "Come, see a traitor punish'd!"
Take me my knight, and set him up thereon,
And let the hangman shave his head quite clean,
And cut his ears off close up to the head;
And cause the minstrels all the while to play
Soft music, and good singing; for this day
Is my high day of triumph; is it not,
Sir Lambert?

SIR LAMBERT.

Ah! on your own blood,
Own name, you heap this foul disgrace? you dare,

With hands and fame thus sullied, to go back
And take the lady Alice —

SIR PETER.

Say her name
Again, and you are dead, slain here by me.
Why should I talk with you, I 'm master here,
And do not want your schooling; is it not
My mercy that you are not dangling dead
There in the gateway with a broken neck?

SIR LAMBERT.

Such mercy! why not kill me then outright?
To die is nothing; but to live that all
May point their fingers! yea, I 'd rather die.

JOHN CURZON.

Why, will it make you any uglier man
To loose your ears? they 're much too big for you,
You ugly Judas!

SIR PETER.

Hold, John!
To LAMBERT.
That 's your choice,
To die, mind! Then you shall die — Lambert mine,
I thank you now for choosing this so well,

It saves me much perplexity and doubt;
Perchance an ill deed too, for half I count
This sparing traitors is an ill deed.
Well,
Lambert, die bravely, and we 're almost friends.

SIR LAMBERT (*grovelling*).

O God! this is a fiend and not a man;
Will some one save me from him? help, help, help!
I will not die.

SIR PETER.

Why, what is this I see?
A man who is a knight, and bandied words
So well just now with me, is lying down,
Gone mad for fear like this! So, so, you thought
You knew the worst, and might say what you pleased.
I should have guess'd this from a man like you.
Eh! righteous Job would give up skin for skin,
Yea, all a man can have for simple life,
And we talk fine, yea, even a hound like this,
Who needs must know that when he dies, deep hell
Will hold him fast for ever — so fine we talk,
"Would rather die" — all that. Now sir, get up!
And choose again: shall it be head sans ears,
Or trunk sans head?
John Curzon, pull him up!
What, life then? go and build the scaffold, John.

Lambert, I hope that never on this earth
We meet again ; that you 'll turn out a monk,
And mend the life I give you, so, farewell,
I 'm sorry you 're a rascal. John, despatch.

IV.

In the Castle on the walls.

JOHN CURZON.

AND yet their hammering is grown fainter now;
An hour might be something, Sir.

SIR PETER.

No fear
But they 'll be ready by the daylight, John.
Far better let this matter have its way;
Don't think of it, your heart grows heavy so.

JOHN CURZON.

Sir, truly? Well, I know not, just as if
I were a builder and knew what would strain
And yet not break, or perhaps might not break.
Just so, you see, Sir, do I hold this; as for death
It makes my heart jump when I say the word,
But otherwise my thoughts keep off from it
Without much driving.

SIR PETER.

John, where were you born?
You never told me yet, whose son were you.

JOHN CURZON.

At Goring by the Thames, a pleasant place:
So many sluices on from lock to lock,

All manner of slim trees — 't is now ten years
Since I was there, and I was young that time,
For I look older than I am, fair Sir.
My father holds a little manor there,
He 's alive still: I mind once — pardon me,
I trouble you.

SIR PETER.

No, Curzon, on my word.

JOHN CURZON.

I mind once when my sister Anne was wed —
And she has children now: Why, what 's to-day?
Tenth of November — we shall mind it long
Hereafter when we sit at home in peace —
The tenth to-day then, or to-morrow — which is it?
I never could keep these things in my mind —
Is poor Anne's birthday — hope it is to-day,
I shouldn't like them to be holding feast
While — God, Sir Peter, those men are in shot.
I 'll fetch some archers, hold you still the while
The Green Tower men will be the least tired out
And John of Waltham draws the stronger bow.
No noise, Sir, I 'll be back soon.

He goes.

SIR PETER.

That man now,
His thoughts go back in such a simply way,

Without much pain, I think, while mine — I feel
As if I were shut up in [a] close room
Steaming and stifling with no hope to reach
The free air outside — O if I had lived
To think of all the many happy days
I should have had, the pleasant quiet things,
Counted as little then, but each one now
Like lost salvation — Say I see her head
Turned round to smile at cheery word of mine;
I see her in the dance her gown held up
To free her feet, going to take my hand,
I see her in some crowded place bend down,
She is so tall, lay her hand flat upon
My breast beneath my chin as who should say,
Come here and talk apart: I see her pale,
Her mouth half open, looking on in fear
As the great tilt-yard fills; I see her, say,
Beside me on the dais; by my hearth
And in my bed who should have been my wife;
Day after day I see the French draw on;
Hold after hold falls as this one will fall,
Knight after knight hangs gibbeted like me,
Pennon on pennon do they drain us out
And I not there to let them. Lambert too,
I know what things he 'll say — ah well, God grant
That he gets slain by these same arrows here
That come up now.

Enter JOHN CURZON.

So, Curzon; little noise,
Wind the big perriere that they call Torte Bouche.
I think we shall just reach them there: see now,
You mark their beffroi by the loose ox-skins
If you strain hard your eyes; now aim well up
To the windward and you 'll hit the midmost.

Set the staff — So, another inch this way of it,
Hands to the winch all ready. Now, Long Wat,
Stand with your six well on the right side
And aim about the little red bombard,
I mark them gathering there; you 'll see them too
Within a little, when your eyelashes
Are well freed, so no hurry. By the Lord!
Here John of Waltham on [the] left, see here!
About the chestnut perriere I saw
The fellow with the red Montauban hat
Who did so well the first day — bend this way,
Lend me your arrow, there by the eightbarb
He 's stooping.

LONG WAT.

Yea, fair Sir, I see right well.

SIR PETER.

Curzon, all 's over; they 're quite ready now —
Are going to assault, I think, at once,
Here in the dark. *Aloud.* Yea, draw the catch when I
Cry out aloud whatever cry comes first.
Lads, draw to the barb points for the King's sake.

— St. Edward for Lord Richard of Bordeaux!
Broad arrows for the King! — Shout, boys, hurrah!
The beffroy 's down.

JOHN CURZON.

The red Montauban hat
Hath got a token not a lady's, sir.

SIR PETER.

By God they 're moving though, their cries, Curzon —
"Our Lady for the Constable of France,"
"Sanxere, Sanxere" "the Marshal for King Charles,
"St. Ives for Clisson —" Curzon, did you hear?

JOHN CURZON.

Yea, Sir, and felt; a good round ton, I doubt,
Has fallen from the wall. I 'm ready.

SIR PETER.

Again
Among the men then, by Lord Clisson's tent.

St. George Guienne! Long Wat and all you
Shoot all you may.

JOHN CURZON.

St. George! Why again there,
It comes away like dried mud; at this rate
They will not need the beffroi. By daybreak
May God have mercy on our souls, fair Sir!
They have made a breach — hark there, they know it too.

V.

In the French camp before the Castle.

SIR PETER *prisoner*, GUESCLIN, CLISSON, SIR LAMBERT.

SIR PETER.

So now is come the ending of my life;
If I could clear this sickening lump away
That sticks in my dry throat, and say a word,
Guesclin might listen.

GUESCLIN.

Tell me, fair sir knight,
If you have been clean liver before God,
And then you need not fear much; as for me,
I cannot say I hate you, yet my oath,
And cousin Lambert's ears here clench the thing.

SIR PETER.

I knew you could not hate me, therefore I
Am bold to pray for life; 't will harm your cause
To hang knights of good name, harm here in France
I have small doubt, at any rate hereafter
Men will remember you another way
Than I should care to be remember'd, ah!
Although hot lead runs through me for my blood,
All this falls cold as though I said, " Sweet lords,

Give back my falcon!"

See how young I am,
Do you care altogether more for France,
Say rather one French faction, than for all
The state of Christendom? a gallant knight,
As (yea, by God!) I have been, is more worth
Than many castles; will you bring this death,
For a mere act of justice, on my head?

Think how it ends all, death! all other things
Can somehow be retrieved, yea, send me forth
Naked and maimed, rather than slay me here;
For somehow will I get me some other clothes,
And somehow will I get me some poor horse,
And, somehow clad in poor old rusty arms,
Will ride and smite among the serried glaives,
Fear not death so; for I can tilt right well,[2]
Let me not say "I could;" I know all tricks,
That sway the sharp sword cunningly; ah you,
You, my Lord Clisson, in the other days
Have seen me learning these, yea, call to mind,
How in the trodden corn by Chartrès town,

---

2 For *Fear not death so,* read

Nor fear — so; for I can tilt right well —
Let me not say, "I could" . . .

I think I am right in this reading; the correction is a little ambiguous, but my father often made a word with a vowel-sound of the same value as in *fear* to stand for two syllables. See *Collected Works,* Vol. 1, p. xxv.

When you were nearly swooning from the back
Of your black horse, those three blades slid at once
From off my sword's edge; pray for me, my lord!

CLISSON.

Nay, this is pitiful, to see him die.
My Lord the Constable, I pray you note
That you are losing some few thousand crowns
By slaying this man; also think; his lands
Along the Garonne river lie for leagues,
And are right rich, a many mills he has,
Three abbeys of grey monks do hold of him,
Though wishing well for Clement, as we do;
I know the next heir, his old uncle, well,
Who does not care two deniers for the knight
As things go now, but slay him, and then see,
How he will bristle up like any perch,
With curves of spears. What! do not doubt, my lord,
You 'll get the money, this man saved my life,
And I will buy him for two thousand crowns;
Well, five then — eh! what! "No" again? well then,
Ten thousand crowns?

GUESCLIN.

My sweet lord, much I grieve
I cannot please you, yea, good sooth, I grieve
This knight must die, as verily he must;
For I have sworn it, so men take him out,
Use him not roughly.

SIR LAMBERT (*coming forward*).

Music, do you know,
Music will suit you well, I think, because
You look so mild, like Laurence being grill'd;
Or perhaps music soft and slow, because
This is high day of triumph unto me,
Is it not, Peter?

You are frighten'd, though,
Eh! you are pale, because this hurts you much,
Whose life was pleasant to you, not like mine,
You ruin'd wretch! Men mock me in the streets,
Only in whispers loud, because I am
Friend of the constable; will this please you,
Unhappy Peter? once a-going home,
Without my servants, and a little drunk,
At midnight through the lone dim lamp-lit streets,
A whore came up and spat into my eyes,
(Rather to blind me than to make me see,)
But she was very drunk, and tottering back,
Even in the middle of her laughter, fell
And cut her head against the pointed stones,
While I lean'd on my staff, and look'd at her,
And cried, being drunk.

Girls would not spit at you.
You are so handsome, I think verily
Most ladies would be glad to kiss your eyes,
And yet you will be hung like a cur dog
Five minutes hence, and grow black in the face,
And curl your toes up. Therefore I am glad.

Guess why I stand and talk this nonsense now,
With Guesclin getting ready to play chess,
And Clisson doing something with his sword,
I can't see what, talking to Guesclin though,
I don't know what about, perhaps of you.
But, cousin Peter, while I stroke your beard,
Let me say this, I 'd like to tell you now
That your life hung upon a game of chess,
That if, say, my squire Robert here should beat,
Why you should live, but hang if I beat him;
Then guess, clever Peter, what I should do then;
Well, give it up? why, Peter, I should let
My squire Robert beat me, then you would think
That you were safe, you know; Eh? not at all,
But I should keep you three days in some hold,
Giving you salt to eat, which would be kind,
Considering the tax there is on salt;
And afterwards should let you go, perhaps?
No I should not, but I should hang you, sir,
With a red rope in lieu of mere grey rope.

But I forgot, you have not told me yet
If you can guess why I talk nonsense thus,
Instead of drinking wine while you are hang'd?
You are not quick at guessing, give it up.
This is the reason; here I hold your hand,
And watch you growing paler, see you writhe,
And this, my Peter, is a joy so dear,
I cannot by all striving tell you how

I love it, nor I think, good man, would you
Quite understand my great delight therein;
You, when you had me underneath you once,
Spat as it were, and said, "Go take him out,"
(That they might do that thing to me whereat,
E'en now this long time off I could well shriek,)
And then you tried forget I ever lived,
And sunk your hating into other things;
While I — St. Denis! though, I think you 'll faint,
Your lips are grey so; yes, you will, unless
You let it out and weep like a hurt child;
Hurrah! you do now. Do not go just yet,
For I am Alice, am right like her now;
Will you not kiss me on the lips, my love? —

CLISSON.

You filthy beast, stand back and let him go,
Or by God's eyes I 'll choke you.

Kneeling to SIR PETER.

Fair sir knight,
I kneel upon my knees and pray to you
That you would pardon me for this your death;
God knows how much I wish you still alive,
Also how heartily I strove to save
Your life at this time; yea, he knows quite well,
(I swear it, so forgive me!) how I would,
If it were possible, give up my life

Upon this grass for yours ; fair knight, although,
He knowing all things knows this thing too, well,
Yet when you see his face some short time hence,
Tell him I tried to save you.

SIR PETER.

O! my lord,
I cannot say this is as good as life,
But yet it makes me feel far happier now,
And if at all, after a thousand years,
I see God's face, I will speak loud and bold,
And tell Him you were kind, and like Himself;
Sir, may God bless you!
Did you note how I
Fell weeping just now? pray you, do not think
That Lambert's taunts did this, I hardly heard
The base things that he said, being deep in thought
Of all things that have happen'd since I was
A little child; and so at last I thought
Of my true lady: truly, sir, it seem'd
No longer gone than yesterday, that this
Was the sole reason God let me be born
Twenty-five years ago, that I might love
Her, my sweet lady, and be loved by her;
This seem'd so yesterday, to-day death comes,
And is so bitter strong, I cannot see
Why I was born.
But as a last request,
I pray you, O kind Clisson, send some man,

Some good man, mind you, to say how I died,
And take my last love to her: fare-you-well,
And may God keep you; I must go now, lest
I grow too sick with thinking on these things;
Likewise my feet are wearied of the earth,
From whence I shall be lifted upright soon.

As he goes.

Ah me! shamed too, I wept at fear of death;
And yet not so, I only wept because
There was no beautiful lady to kiss me
Before I died, and sweetly wish good speed
From her dear lips. O for some lady, though
I saw her ne'er before; Alice, my love,
I do not ask for; Clisson was right kind,
If he had been a woman, I should die
Without this sickness: but I am all wrong,
So wrong and hopelessly afraid to die.
There, I will go.
My God! how sick I am,
If only she could come and kiss me now.

VI.

The Hotel de la Barde, Bordeaux.

The LADY ALICE DE LA BARDE *looking out of a window into the street.*

No news yet! surely, still he holds his own;
That garde stands well; I mind me passing it
Some months ago; God grant the walls are strong!
I heard some knights say something yestereve,
I tried hard to forget: words far apart
Struck on my heart; something like this; one said,
"What eh! a Gascon with an English name,
Harpdon?" then nought, but afterwards, "Poictou."
As one who answers to a question ask'd
Then carelessly regretful came, "No, no."
Whereto in answer loud and eagerly,
One said, "Impossible? Christ, what foul play!"
And went off angrily; and while thenceforth
I hurried gaspingly afraid, I heard,
"Guesclin;" "Five thousand men-at-arms;" "Clisson."
My heart misgives me it is all in vain
I send these succours; and in good time there!
Their trumpet sounds, ah! here they are; good knights.
God up in heaven keep you.
If they come
And find him prisoner — for I can't believe

Guesclin will slay him, even though they storm —
(The last horse turns the corner.)
God in Heaven!
What have I got to thinking of at last!
That thief I will not name is with Guesclin,
Who loves him for his lands. My love! my love!
O, if I lose you after all the past,
What shall I do?
I cannot bear the noise
And light street out there, with this thought alive,
Like any curling snake within my brain;
Let me just hide my head within these soft
Deep cushions, there to try and think it out.

Lying in the window-seat.

I cannot hear much noise now, and I think
That I shall go to sleep: it all sounds dim
And faint, and I shall soon forget most things;
Yea, almost that I am alive and here;
It goes slow, comes slow, like a big mill-wheel
On some broad stream, with long green weeds a-sway,
And soft and slow it rises and it falls,
Still going onward.
Lying so, one kiss,
And I should be in Avalon asleep,
Among the poppies, and the yellow flowers;
And they should brush my cheek, my hair being spread
Far out among the stems; soft mice and small
Eating and creeping all about my feet,

Red shod and tired; and the flies should come
Creeping o'er my broad eyelids unafraid;
And there should be a noise of water going,
Clear blue, fresh water breaking on the slates,
Likewise the flies should creep — God's eyes! God help,
A trumpet? I will run fast, leap adown
The slippery sea-stairs, where the crabs fight.
Ah!
I was half dreaming, but the trumpet's true,
He stops here at our house. The Clisson arms?
Ah, now for news. But I must hold my heart,
And be quite gentle till he is gone out;
And afterwards, — but he is still alive,
He must be still alive.

Enter a SQUIRE *of* CLISSON'S.

Good day, fair sir,
I give you welcome, knowing whence you come.

SQUIRE.

My Lady Alice de la Barde, I come
From Oliver Clisson, knight and mighty lord,
Bringing you tidings: I make bold to hope
You will not count me villian, even if
They wring your heart; nor hold me still in hate.
For I am but a mouthpiece after all,
A mouthpiece, too, of one who wishes well
To you and your's.

ALICE.

Can you talk faster, sir,
Get over all this quicker? fix your eyes
On mine, I pray you, and whate'er you see,
Still go on talking fast, unless I fall,
Or bid you stop.

SQUIRE.

I pray your pardon then,
And, looking in your eyes, fair lady, say
I am unhappy that your knight is dead.
Take heart, and listen! let me tell you all.
We were five thousand goodly men-at-arms,
And scant five hundred had he in that hold;
His rotten sand-stone walls were wet with rain,
And fell in lumps wherever a stone hit;
Yet for three days about the barrier there
The deadly glaives were gather'd, laid across,
And push'd and pull'd; the fourth our engines came;
But still amid the crash of falling walls,
And roar of lombards, rattle of hard bolts,
The steady bow-strings flash'd, and still stream'd out
St. George's banner, and the seven swords,
And still they cried, "St. George Guienne," until
Their walls were flat as Jericho's of old,
And our rush came, and cut them from the keep.

ALICE.

Stop, sir, and tell me if you slew him then,

And where he died, if you can really mean
That Peter Harpdon, the good knight, is dead?

SQUIRE.

Fair lady, in the base-court —

ALICE.

What base-court?
What do you talk of? Nay, go on, go on;
'T was only something gone within my head:
Do you not know, one turns one's head round quick,
And something cracks there with sore pain? go on,
And still look at my eyes.

SQUIRE.

Almost alone,
There in the base-court fought he with his sword,
Using his left hand much, more than the wont
Of most knights now-a-days; our men gave back,
For wheresoever he hit a downright blow,
Some one fell bleeding, for no plate could hold
Against the sway of body and great arm;
Till he grew tired, and some man (no! not I,
I swear not I, fair lady, as I live!)
Thrust at him with a glaive between the knees,
And threw him; down he fell, sword undermost;
Many fell on him, crying out their cries,
Tore his sword from him, tore his helm off, and —

ALICE.

Yea, slew him; I am much too young to live,
Fair God, so let me die.
You have done well,
Done all your message gently, pray you go,
Our knights will make you cheer; moreover, take
This bag of franks for your expenses.

The SQUIRE *kneels.*

But
You do not go; still looking at my face,
You kneel! what, squire, do you mock me then?
You need not tell me who has set you on,
But tell me only, 't is a made-up tale.
You are some lover may-be, or his friend;
Sir, if you loved me once, or your friend loved,
Think, is it not enough that I kneel down
And kiss your feet, your jest will be right good
If you give in now, carry it too far,
And 't will be cruel; not yet? but you weep
Almost, as though you loved me; love me then,
And go to Heaven by telling all your sport,
And I will kiss you, then with all my heart,
Upon the mouth; O! what can I do then
To move you?

SQUIRE.

Lady fair, forgive me still!
You know I am so sorry, but my tale

Is not yet finish'd:

So they bound his hands,
And brought him tall and pale to Guesclin's tent,
Who, seeing him, leant his head upon his hand,
And ponder'd somewhile, afterwards, looking up —
Fair dame, what shall I say?

ALICE.

Yea, I know now,
Good squire, you may go now with my thanks.

SQUIRE.

Yet, lady, for your own sake I say this,
Yea, for my own sake, too, and Clisson's sake.
When Guesclin told him he must be hanged soon,
Within a while he lifted up his head
And spoke for his own life; not crouching, though,
As abjectly afraid to die, nor yet
Sullenly brave as many a thief will die;
Nor yet as one that plays at japes with God:
Few words he spoke; not so much what he said
Moved us, I think, as, saying it, there played
Strange tenderness from that big soldier there
About his pleading; eagerness to live
Because folk loved him, and he loved them back,
And many gallant plans unfinish'd now
For ever. Clisson's heart, which may God bless!
Was moved to pray for him, but all in vain;

Wherefore I bring this message:
That he waits,
Still loving you, within the little church
Whose windows, with the one eye of the light
Over the altar, every night behold
The great dim broken walls he strove to keep!

There my Lord Clisson did his burial well.
Now, lady, I will go; God give you rest!

ALICE.

Thank Clisson from me, squire, and farewell!
And now to keep myself from going mad.
Christ! I have been a many times to church,
And, ever since my mother taught me prayers,
Have used them daily, but to-day I wish
To pray another way; come face to face,
O Christ, that I may clasp your knees and pray,
I know not what, at any rate come now
From one of many places where you are;
Either in Heaven amid thick angel wings,
Or sitting on the altar strange with gems,
Or high up in the dustiness of the apse;
Let us go, You and I, a long way off,
To the little damp, dark, Poitevin church;
While you sit on the coffin in the dark,
Will I lie down, my face on the bare stone
Between your feet, and chatter anything
I have heard long ago, what matters it

So I may keep you there, your solemn face
And long hair even-flowing on each side,
Until you love me well enough to speak,
And give me comfort; yea, till o'er your chin,
And cloven red beard the great tears roll down
In pity for my misery, and I die,
Kissed over by you.

Eh Guesclin! if I were
Like Countess Mountfort now, that kiss'd the knight,
Across the salt sea come to fight for her;
Ah! just to go about with many knights,
Wherever you went, and somehow on one day,
In a thick wood to catch you off your guard,
Let you find, you and your some fifty friends,
Nothing but arrows wheresoe'er you turn'd,
Yea, and red crosses, great spears over them;
And so, between a lane of my true men,
To walk up pale and stern and tall, and with
My arms on my surcoat, and his therewith,
And then to make you kneel, O knight Guesclin;
And then — alas! alas! when all is said,
What could I do but let you go again,
Being pitiful woman? I get no revenge,
Whatever happens; and I get no comfort,
I am but weak, and cannot move my feet,
But as men bid me.

Strange I do not die.
Suppose this has not happen'd after all;
I will lean out again and watch for news.

I wonder how long I can still feel thus,
As though I watch'd for news, feel as I did
Just half-an-hour ago, before this news.
How all the street is humming, some men sing,
And some men talk; some look up at the house,
Then lay their heads together and look grave;
Their laughter pains me sorely in the heart,
Their thoughtful talking makes my head turn round,
Yea, some men sing, what is it then they sing?
Eh Launcelot, and love and fate and death;
They ought to sing of him who was as wight
As Launcelot or Wade, and yet avail'd
Just nothing, but to fail and fail and fail,
And so at last to die and leave me here,
Alone and wretched; yea, perhaps they will,
When many years are past, make songs of us;
God help me, though, truly I never thought
That I should make a story in this way,
A story that his eyes can never see.

(*One sings from outside.*)

Therefore be it believed
Whatsoever he grieved,
When his horse was relieved,
This Launcelot,

Beat down on his knee,
Right valiant was he

God's body to see,
Though he saw it not.

Right valiant to move,
But for his sad love
The high God above
Stinted his praise.

Yet so he was glad
That his son Lord Galahad
That high joyaunce had
All his life-days.

Sing we therefore then
Launcelot's praise again,
For he wan crownés ten,
If he wan not twelve.

To his death from his birth
He was muckle of worth,
Lay him in the cold earth,
A long grave ye may delve.

Omnes homines benedicite!
This last fitte ye may see
All men pray for me,
Who made this history
Cunning and fairly.

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF SIR PETER HARPDON'S END.

THE most memorable achievement of the volume is, however, *Sir Peter Harpdon's End*, which stands by itself, or, perhaps, with one other poem, *The Haystack in the Floods*. The historian of English drama during the second half of the nineteenth century might, if he were unwary, omit William Morris from his reckonings. If he were astute enough to remember him it would probably be as the author of *Love is Enough*. And yet at a time when some curious spell seems to have fallen on the poets whenever they turned their thoughts to the stage, *Sir Peter Harpdon's End* reminds us of one, at least, to whom the union of drama and poetry was not impossible. Morris himself would seem to have been unconscious of the fact, for not only was he careless in this instance when a little care would have made his success strikingly complete, but henceforth he neglected this side of his faculty, exercising it on but one other occasion, and then in a more or less experimental mood, of which something will

be said later. It will be well to examine this short play in detail, for its importance is apt to be under-estimated. In writing it Morris realized, as did no poet of his time and scarcely any poet since the close of the great epoch of poetic drama in England, the exact value of action in drama. The complete subordination of character and idea to action is a brief epitome of that degeneration of the modern theatre from which we are now witnessing the dawn of a deliverance. The supreme, though not necessarily the only, function of the drama is to show the development of character and the progress of idea through the medium of action, and until to-day the stage has been surrendered for a century, if not for a longer period, to work that is wholly unconcerned with this condition. The event has been everything. The poets from Shelley to Swinburne have realized this error and revolted, but in their eagerness to correct an abuse that was threatening the highest manifestation of their art, they have with amazing regularity overlooked another condition which, if not of equal importance, cannot be disregarded without lamentable

results. Determined to dispossess action of its usurped authority, they have neglected its lawful and indispensable service. Their opponents in asserting action at the cost of all other things, and having, in consequence, nothing to say beyond the bare statement of events, have failed to produce either good literature or good drama, whilst they themselves, in turning to ideas alone, have had much to say and have so produced good and often noble literature, but in neglecting to preserve the right balance between ideas and action they too have failed to produce good drama. They have, unfortunately, no just answer to the charge that they constantly allow the play of character and idea to be unrelated to the action which they have chosen as their framework. Their failure in dramatic result, though free of the deplorable poverty and baseness of the method against which they were a reaction, is no less complete. Shelley, Byron, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, all wrote fine dramatic poetry, but they cannot show between them a poetic play that achieves with any precision the fundamental purpose of drama.

Morris's instinct in this matter was perfectly poised. The mechanical part of the technique in *Sir Peter Harpdon's End* is as crude as it well could be, chiefly, as I have suggested, on account of the poet's indifference. Short scenes follow each other in rapid succession, and in the middle of the play there is a hiatus which is intelligible enough but destroys the dramatic continuity. These defects make it difficult, though not impossible, for stage presentation, but otherwise it would, I believe, survive the ordeal triumphantly. The opening of the play is admirably contrived. In a few deft strokes the character of Peter Harpdon is outlined, and we know that he has humour and understanding of men, and a tenderness coloured by a certain roughness of temper. All this is shown strictly by his relation to the action in which he is involved — there is not a line but helps the development of this. Then in perfectly natural sequence the action enables him in a speech of little more than twenty lines to define the circumstances from which it has sprung, and thus we have set before us at the outset the nature of the protagonist and the situation

in relation to which we are to look for that nature's manifestation; and already it is clear, in the character of John Curzon, that the people among whom Harpdon is to move will be no less sharply stated and proved than himself. The construction of this opening could not well be more skilful or instinctively right. Then follows what at first seems to be a momentary lapse into the dramatic error of which I have spoken. In a long soliloquy Peter reveals directly his spiritual and mental attitude towards this action in which he is involved and indirectly the commentary of the poet himself upon that attitude. This in itself is perfectly legitimate, and supported, of course, by all the poets of whom Shakespeare is the spring, indeed by all the great dramatic poets of literature. The Greek chorus realizes this end as one of its essential functions no less clearly than do the soliloquies of Hamlet; and until the poets see once again the significance of this fact and adapt it to modern needs, refusing to have their authority usurped by theatrical showmen and their stage carpenters, they will continue to fail in bringing back their art to the theatre. But

it must always be remembered that this choric element of the drama justifies itself only as long as it limits itself to the presentation of idea growing directly out of the action. When it allows digression and elaboration for their own sake, or the sake of some altogether extraneous idea, in short for any reason other than intensifying the fundamental idea which the progress of the action creates, it becomes undramatic and ceases to fulfil its only right purpose. It is at this point that the poets since the close of the Elizabethan age have misunderstood the necessities of drama, and in Peter Harpdon's soliloquy we suspect Morris for a moment of the same error. But careful examination of the speech itself proves the suspicion to be almost if not wholly unfounded. We find that there is nothing that is not the immediate result of his position, and the worst that can be said of it is that there are turns of thought which, although not dramatically irrelevant, are a little superfluous and do not heighten our perception. It is curious that in this speech there is evidence of external contemporary influence in manner such as is scarcely to be found elsewhere in the book.

There is at least a suggestion of Browning in such lines as —

> Now this is hard: a month ago,
> And a few minutes' talk had set things right
> 'Twixt me and Alice; — if she had a doubt,
> As (may Heaven bless her!) I scarce think she had,
> 'T was but their hammer, hammer in her ears,
> Of 'how Sir Peter fail'd at Lusac bridge:'
> And 'how Sir Lambert' (think now!) 'his dear friend,
> His sweet, dear cousin, could not but confess
> That Peter's talk tended towards the French,
> Which he' (for instance Lambert) 'was glad of,
> Being' (Lambert, you see) 'on the French side.'

The first scene closes with a swift turn of action carried on correspondingly swift dramatic speech. Peter Harpdon is defending an English castle in Poictou. His antagonist is his cousin Lambert, who has misrepresented a circumstance of war to impugn Peter's loyalty to his cause, careful for his own purposes that the rumour shall reach the ears of Peter's lady, Alice. Peter has had no means of defending himself, and his soliloquy is the outcome of the suffering that he experiences at the thought of his wife's possible mistrust of him. As he finishes, his servant, Clisson, comes in again, saying that a herald has come from Lambert —

What says the herald of our cousin, sir?

CURZON.

So please you, sir, concerning your estate,
He has good will to talk with you.

SIR PETER.

Outside,
I 'll talk with him, close by the gate St. Ives.
Is he unarm'd?

CURZON.

Yea, sir, in a long gown.

SIR PETER.

Then bid them bring me hither my furr'd gown,
With the long sleeves, and under it I 'll wear,
By Lambert's leave, a secret coat of mail.

He will also take an axe, one — as we should expect of Morris — 'with Paul wrought on the blade' —

CURZON.

How, sir! Will you attack him unawares,
And slay him unarm'd?

SIR PETER.

Trust me, John, I know
The reason why he comes here with sleeved gown
Fit to hide axes up. So, let us go.

Peter Harpdon is a Gascon knight, and in the next scene Lambert urges that this fact combined with expedience, for the French are in the ascendancy, should induce him to leave the English. Peter answers him at length but finishes in an aside —

> Talk, and talk, and talk —
> I know this man has come to murder me,
> And yet I talk still.

Lambert accuses him then directly —

> If I said
> 'You are a traitor, being, as you are
> Born Frenchman.'

They flash out at each other and Lambert 'takes hold of something in his sleeve,' strikes at Peter with a dagger, and is taken. He is brought before Harpdon in the castle and sentenced —

> Let the hangman shave his head quite clean,
> And cut his ears off close up to the head.

Again we have the clear-cut delineation of character thrown up on a framework of simple and logical action which all the while is interesting as a means but not as an end. The blend of nobility and savagery in Peter's

nature stands sharply contrasted with the meanness and merely dull cruelty of Lambert's. At this point the hiatus occurs. The next scene is in the French camp, and Sir Peter Harpdon is a prisoner before Guesclin and his officers, Lambert being one of them. The dramatic opposition of the situation to that which has immediately preceded it is admirable, but we need some explanation that is not made. Apart from this defect, however, Morris continues to build up his play with flawless instinct. Defeat had turned Lambert's cruelty into pitiful and cringing terror, whilst Peter at the moment of his power over his rival, although he had not spared him, had shown some mercy, as to one whom he despised. Now, with the shifting circumstance, the two prove themselves with unerring completeness. Defeat purges Peter Harpdon's nature of all its grosser parts, and he responds perfectly to the demands of tragic chance; whilst Lambert in his triumph reveals himself in all the degradation of a mean and wholly unheroic villainy. In both cases the development is logical, indeed inevitable, and yet it depends strictly upon the course of the action for its

being. Already we know the natures of the men, and, given the event, can foresee their attitude with some certainty, but it needs the event itself to complete our understanding. Peter is not a coward nor lacking in nobility, yet when he hears that Lambert has come to him 'in a long gown' he knows what that means, and he makes no foolish boast of fearlessness, but frankly prepares himself with mail and axe. Now, before his judges, the same temper is evident. Quite simply, and with no blind defiance or pretence at indifference, he pleads for his life, not, as the squire says of him afterwards —

> Sullenly brave as many a thief will die,
> Nor yet as one that plays at japes with God.

He states his case clearly, with dignity, yet earnestly. Clisson intercedes for him in a passage that outlines with precision yet another character, and Guesclin is sorry but obdurate; he must die. Then Lambert taunts him. He exults in the downfall of his enemy with a cruelty that is bestial yet calculated in every stroke, until his victim blenches. Then —

I think you 'll faint,
Your lips are grey so; yes, you will, unless
You let it out and weep like a hurt child;
Hurrah! you do now. Do not go just yet,
For I am Alice, am right like her now;
Will you not kiss me on the lips, my love?

and Clisson breaks in —

You filthy beast, stand back and let him go,
Or by God's eyes I 'll choke you.

This second speech of Clisson's is his last, and yet the tenderness and strength of the man are shown so definitely as to make him complete and living. He continues, asking Peter to forgive him for his share in his death —

I would,
If it were possible, give up my life
Upon this grass for yours; fair knight, although,
He knowing all things knows this thing too, well,
Yet when you see His face some short time hence,
Tell Him I tried to serve you.

and Peter makes his last utterance, full of passionate realization of the moment, yet chiming to his character consistently to the end —

Oh! my lord,
I cannot say this is as good as life,
But yet it makes me feel far happier now,

> And if at all, after a thousand years,
> I see God's face, I will speak loud and bold,
> And tell Him you were kind, and like Himself;
> Sir, may God bless you!

He would not have them think that when he wept he did so because of Lambert's taunts. He was

> Deep in thought
> Of all things that have happened since I was
> A little child; and so at last I thought
> Of my true lady: truly, sir, it seem'd
> No longer gone than yesterday, that this
> Was the sole reason God let me be born
> Twenty-five years ago, that I might love
> Her, my sweet lady, and be loved by her;

and so up to the close, which has all the awe and terror but also the pity and exaltation of authentic tragedy —

> I only wept because
> There was no beautiful lady to kiss me
> Before I died. . . .
> . . . O for some lady, though
> I saw her ne'er before; Alice, my love,
> I do not ask for; Clisson was right kind,
> If he had been a woman, I should die
> Without this sickness.

The last scene, as just in dramatic instinct as the rest of the play, tells of the bearing

of the news of Peter's death to the Lady Alice.

I have examined this play in some detail, and with a good many quotations, for two reasons. One, already stated, to show that Morris had an understanding of the nature of drama which is generally overlooked, and secondly, because it is a common thing to hear people to whom poetry is a matter of real importance say that they find Morris — for all his beauty — languid and lacking in power of concentration. If *Sir Peter Harpdon's End* be languid or anything but tense with concentrated emotion from beginning to end, then I confess my sense of values to be much awry.

From *William Morris: A Critical Study by John Drinkwater* (New York, Mitchell Kennerley, 1912), pp. 67–78.

The Bibelot

THE *name of Sir James Henry Yoxall, M. P., is less well-known on our side of the water than it deserves to be, but when he committed to print his volume entitled* The Wander Years: Being Some Account of Journeys Into Life, Letters and Art, (*London, 1909,*) *he did a very lovable and unforgettable thing. Notwithstanding this fact it is the way of certain English reviewers to find fault with his style and still more fault with some of his subjects chosen for these wayside divagations. Several essays had already appeared in Thackeray's beloved* Cornhill, *and largely because of an association of ideas begotten by a book where none is bad, the greater part indeed particularly good, we have decided upon* From Calais to Holborn and Avignon: Consule Planco. *The sub-title is that old familiar of the hapless English schoolboy which, from a period almost coincident with the Norman Conquest, has remained an ever present reminder of the unfading excellence of the Latin classics and of Horace in particular.* Consule Planco, *I say, comes back with the right atmosphere and a lightness of suggestive touch which*

Sir James confesses was in his mind, whereat we in turn are reminded of other years,

> *"When he was young as you were young,*
> *When he was young and lutes were strung,*
> *And love-lamps in the casement hung."*

Here it is that we come upon Thackeray which the essay develops with almost unimaginable poignancy for such of us who revere his memory. Hence with Sir James' meditations before us we can but believe these Wander Years *will compel our gentle reader to the end of the volume. Take in succession what conceivably are the finer things in this book:* The Wandering Fire; Bygones in France; On a Platter at Montreuil; Of Certain English Old China; *and best of all* A Broken Lance, *or* The Billingsley Rose. *True, as the* Athenæum *reviewer has not failed to point out, "his faults of taste are generally expressed in the crudest vernacular of his native land," and, "the influence of Thackeray is responsible for many of his worst passages," and so forth and so on to the end of the review. One regrets all this, of course: what one does not regret maugre these demerits is that our book compels attention, particularly in* Consule Planco, *going over the old roads and discoursing of the old inns known to "Yorick" Sterne and beloved both by him*

and the writer of Desseins, "*dear old Thack.*" *The hardest thing a lover of Thackeray has before him is to utter in sober sincerity the fifty-year old affection which will survive till "Finis itself come to an end, and the Infinite [is] begun." So easy it is to appear sentimental before a generation who has forgotten to read the* Roundabout Papers![1]

Sir James, however, is not only the writer of this bewitching volume but figures notably as an educator and man of letters.[2] *As a collector of* objets d'art, bibelots *and* bijouterie, — *one may conceive him to be a very practical adviser in matters of bargain and sale. His* A B C About Collecting *and its sequel,* More About Collecting, *are well worth our friendly appreciation. As a novelist we cannot say he has specially*

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1 *They should be read with the notes by Lady Ritchie. See the Biographical Edition. (London, 1899.)*

2 *See the list of his books: Nutbrown Roger and I, 1891; The Lonely Pyramid, 1892 (edition in German, 1899); Secondary Education, 1896; The Girl from St. Agneta's, 1902; The Rommany Stone, 1902; Alain Tanger's Wife, 1903; Smalilou, 1904; Beyond the Wall, 1906; Chateau Royal, 1908; The Wander Years, 1909; The A B C About Collecting, 1910 (second edition, 1912); The Countess Stoops, 1911; More About Collecting, 1914.*

attracted us, although it is true we have but hastily surveyed this portion of his literary output. We can and do say that The Wander Years *has been perused more than once entire, and for the benefit of those who love old things we regret not being able to include* The Billingsley Rose *as well as that other essay which presents Elia in his most lovable aspect. After all it is what we bring to a book as well as what we take away that decides its personal value to a reader.* On Certain English Old China *recalls "Saint Charles" just as surely as* Consule Planco *brings to fond recollection the author of a famous juvenile journey to the vanished Paris of 1830. Thus a book, however faulty in style, that can do this is to be accounted a success, and in* The Wander Years *these triumphs of matter over style are repeated more than once, various friendly critics notwithstanding. Elsewhere it has been said, and Sir James is quoting Thomas Carlyle: "The Age of Romance has not ceased; it never ceases; it does not, if we will think of it, so much as very sensibly decline."*

FOR OCTOBER:

WHERE THE FOREST MURMURS
BY FIONA MACLEOD.

CONSULE PLANCO

By

SIR JAMES H. YOXALL.

I cannot make these present times present to me.

CHARLES LAMB.

TIME slips from us like breath, unseen, unheard: was it not yester-year that we used to add dates to our dessert at dinner-parties, by argument as to when the new Century would actually come in? Swathe after swathe has been mown by a stern old scythe since then; here we are in Nineteen hundred and nine, — some of us; and positively, people of three score years and eighteen have been born and buried since so modern a person as Thackeray went off on his wanderjahre.

Time has no latitude nor longitude, yet a change of era disconcerts one's sense of position on the map. So long as we lived in the Nineteenth century an event like Thackeray's runaway trip to Paris could seem almost near. But to realize, now, that when England first heard of Becky Sharp the tumult at Waterloo had only thirty years fallen silent, is amazing — to us who first read *Vanity Fair* in the 'seventies, I mean. For Thackeray seems to live on with us still; I believe I lately met him on the stairs at the Reform Club, bright-spectacled, broad-beaming, benign.

Yet it was quite as far back as 1830 when he, a young dandy with "a blue dress-coat, brass buttons, and a sweet figured silk waistcoat" in his valise, came into Calais Harbour by the night-packet, heard in the dark dawn the clatter of wooden shoon on the quay, caught a rope, climbed ashore, and went off to breakfast at Dessein's. At Dessein's, mind you, — *Dessein's*, with its immortalized coachyard! — Dessein's, where Sterne himself had put up. Moi qui vous parle, I have put up at a hundred inns of old France, but never, alas, at Dessein's! You may yet be a guest of the Hotel d'Angleterre at Blois, that stately old hostelry down by the bridge, to which Turner came jogging; but never will you house at Dessein's. Thackeray did. Consule Planco, — as he loved to write — he came to "that charming old hostel, with its court, its gardens, its lordly kitchens and its princely waiter, a gentleman of the old school who has welcomed the finest company in Europe," but never will welcome you. Ushered to the hearth where Sterne and Horace Walpole and Arthur Young had taken their transient ease he came, this undergraduate Thackeray, this young Milord fresh

from term at Cambridge, with twenty pounds in his pocket; twenty pounds was the sum which chartered moi qui vous parle abroad the first time, let me humbly remark. One's glorious first twenty pounds to spare, and to spend on travel! *That* is why I remark it, Cynicus, — you may cease your gibe; any one's glorious first twenty pounds to spare and to spend!

I daresay Thackeray, like you, hardly thought of Sterne at Calais, that first voyage. But he went to Dessein's a second time, and there he spied the ghost of Yorick, for he slept and dreamed in what had once been Sterne's own bed. And he woke in the smaller hours, you remember, and saw the "lean figure in the black-satin breeches, his sinister smile, his long thin fingers pointing in the moonlight." Fancy, no doubt, but there have been less substantial ghosts. All fancy indeed, for the end of that particular *Roundabout Paper* confesses it; "Dessein's of nowadays is not the Dessein's which Mr. Sterne and Mr. Brummell and I recollect in the good old times. The town of Calais has bought the old hotel, and Dessein's has gone over to Quillacq's. And I was there

yesterday." Yesterday, eheu! — not even a Quillacq's can be found in Calais now.

From Calais to Amiens is the flattest of going, but — "I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba and cry ''T is all barren,'" quoth Yorick himself. "I declare, said I, clapping my hands cheerily together, that was I in a desert I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections," — and that 's the true spirit for one's wander-years. Compassionate the purblind who potter abroad to inspect the new and inhabit the present, but catch no glimpse of the adorable past. Thackeray was not of their kidney; each of his later journeys reminded him delightfully of his first. "You young folks don't remember the apple-girls who used to follow the diligence up the hill beyond Boulogne!" Aha, jeunesse of the railway era, "in making Continental journeys with young folks an oldster may be very quiet, and to outward appearance melancholy, but really he has gone back to the days of his youth and is amusing himself with all his might. He is noting the horses as they come squealing out of the posthouse yard at midnight, he is enjoying the delicious

meals at Beauvais and Amiens"; and presently, also in souvenir, that memory which is a kind of resurrection and second existence for us, he will be gazing "at beautiful beings with gigot sleeves and teatray hats" — aha, jeunesse of the ugly automobile era! — "under the golden chestnuts of the Tuileries or round the Place Vendôme." But where be the Tuileries now!

The Place Vendôme — the Square of the great Column — remains; but a mere region of five-o'clock tea-shops and palace hotels it is to-day. Not far away from it there used to be, in Thackeray's bursariate,

> "a street in Paris famous,
> For which no rhyme our language yields,
> Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is,
> The New Street of the Little Fields."

And, consule Planco, in that street there used to be an inn — a dozen times I have searched for it, vainly —

> "an inn not rich and splendid,
> But still in comfortable case,
> The which in youth I 've oft attended,
> To eat a bowl of bouillabaisse."

Bouillabaisse? I have eaten it at Marseilles, with an old pirate of a Catalan boatman for companion, but never in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs shall bouillabaisse be tasted again. The Paris of Thackeray's wander-years is evanished, like Dessein's, like Yorick's ghost; one cannot recapture that first fine careless rapture; that young and ravished ecstasy cannot be evoked in the blonde capital of the France of to-day.

And Thackeray's London has become consule Planco, too. Strolling "from Shepherd's Inn into Holborn," he stood looking "at Woodgate's bric-à-brac shop, which I can never pass without delaying at the windows." If he were going to be hanged, he wrote — though the Holborn journey to the "triple tree" at Tyburn was a bygone long before Thackeray saw England — "I would beg the cart to stop, and let me have one look more at that delightful omnium gatherum." When was the Woodgate collection scattered? What dealer became Woodgate's business heir? Nobody can tell me; the china-maniacs of that day are all themselves on the shelf. Next, tearing himself away from Woodgate's window, Thackeray came

to "Gale's little shop"—ah, yes, the little shops are the best; if I were the commercial owner of an omnium gatherum it should house in a little shop; a low-windowed, small-paned, dusky little place, containing infinite riches in a little room. "Gale's little shop" was "No. 47, which is also a favourite haunt of mine," Mr. Roundabout told his readers. And in the "little back parlour" of "Gale's little shop"—where is it now, what is its new number in the changed High Holborn, and what is its present trade?—he found "Chinese gongs" and "one of those great porcelain stools which you see in gardens," and "old Saxe and Sèvres plates," and "Fürstenberg, Carl Theodor, Worcester, Amstel, Nankin, and other jim-crockery." A most incomplete and rococo list, a china-maniac of to-day would tell him, if they could stand beside each other at the window of one of the curio shops—"curio" is a word itself unknown consule Planco—which stud New Oxford Street in the present year of our Lord. Amstel, forsooth! Who goes hunting for Amstel porcelain nowadays? Can it be possible that Thackeray was blind to the pellucid beauty of

"Chelsea" glaze? Was there not bluish-white "Bow" to be bought for a song, consule Planco, and did he neglect to acquire it? Had he never heard of "Lowestoft," that enigma and battle-horse of all porcelain? In his spectacled eyes was "Nankin" the only "Oriental"? "Wedgwood," too, and "Mason," and "Whieldon," and "Walton," the transparent wares of Swansea and Nantgarw, sculptural old Derby biscuit figures, "Worcester square-mark," and Salopian willow-pattern smacking of the East — were *these* unfamiliar to Mr. Titmarsh? Maybe they didn't know everything consule Planco, after all.

Going into the little back room of Gale's little shop, and Mr. Gale being called out "by a customer" — it would seem that Thackeray did *not* go in to buy — "an actual GUILLOTINE" became visible in that little back room, and instantly the strange tale of The Notch on the Axe was born behind the beaming spectacles. Cagliostro was father to that tale, by-the-by, as was Casanova to "Barry Lyndon," for Thackeray knew his Eighteenth century as well as he knew his Paris — that old high-shouldered, beetling,

narrow-streeted, cornery Paris which, alas! itself is almost gone. The guillotine stood "some nine feet high, narrow, a pretty piece of upholstery enough" — made of mahogany, I fancy, in colour most appropriately red. Who was it that collected guillotines, I should like to know? The customer in the front shop was bargaining for something older than the guillotine, however, offering "three pounds fourteen and sixpence for a blue shepherd in pâte tendre," indeed. That also is consule Planco, for who nowadays can pick up a soft-paste Sèvres shepherd, dipped in that specific blue of turquoise seen through sea-water, and gold-flecked, for "three pounds fourteen and sixpence"? Enough to make even the incorruptible sea green with envy, that!

Gale's little shop, in which such astonishing bargains were to be found, stood somewhere near to Kingsgate Street, let me tell you, Hobbinol — near to Kingsgate Street, which was an old and distinguished neighbour of High Holborn then. But where in Limbo is Kingsgate Street to-day? Vanished, obliterated, rased, non est. Every summer Americans in shirts and shirt-waists search

for it, and lament its vanishing with tears. Kingsway has ousted Kingsgate Street, and I owe the London County Council a gentle grudge for that. Rather a squalid shrine of pilgrimage, perhaps, but even so late as 1876 you might espy in Kingsgate Street a barber's shop with a bird-cage or two in the doorway; and I will not swear that once I did not perceive the face of Mrs. Gamp at the window above. But Dickens himself did not know that Sairey dwelt in Kingsgate Street when, in July, 1837, he went slammocking past her abode in a thing which was still called a hackney carriage, on his joyous way to the Bull and Mouth in St. Martin's-le-Grand and the mail-coach for Dover. Dickens the young and uproariously blithe, and a jaunt abroad, — imagine it, Saturno rege! That hackney carriage would have straw in the bottom of it, and a driver with seven capes to his coat, seated on a little seat at the side; but a magical Arabian carpet it would seem, all the same. Dickens would cross the Channel in a short steamboat with a long funnel, that distributed smuts by the myriad. He would land at Calais for his trip to Flanders — what does

the very word Flanders suggest but Laurence Sterne, by-the-by? — and he would descend at Dessein's, the old Dessein's, and be magnificently attended by the princely waiter there.

Railways were the death of Dessein's, I imagine; but in 1837, when Dickens first went gallivanting off on his wander-years, there was not an inch of railroad in all Flanders to be seen. Not till the days when he went to Italy through France — and even then he travelled "post," as he made the Dorrits do, you remember — did the iron road begin to run anywhere in Belgium. The diligences still held the highway, "Fugio ut Fulgor," proudly bragged in large gilt letters on their dashboards. There is a yarn of what certain Belgian engineers did when they came back from England with whole sheaves of sketches, plans, specifications, and particulars about "the new English travelling road," and were set to build one like it in the Low Country. They made their first railway across the flats, and when it was finished, on almost the very day before it was to be opened with Royal pomp and circumstance, the chief engineer, looking at the English plans and comparing

them with his own achievement, struck his forehead with sudden tragical gesture and cried, "Mon Dieu, we've forgotten the tunnel!" A railway without a tunnel could not be a railway at all, they thought, so they covered in the deepest cutting they could find.

"I remember old diligences," middle-aged Thackeray wrote, "and old postilions in pigtails and jack-boots, who were once as alive as I am, and whose cracking whips I have heard in the midnight many and many a time. *Now* where are they? Behold, they have been ferried over Styx." But that was written in the 'sixties of last century; in the 'forties French postilions were still on the hither bank. The old road-maps were then still in use, with wee postilions' bugles to mark each place of relay. To-day, when the motor-car carries you through Lorraine or Gascony, antiquating even the chemin de fer — to-day, when a diligence can be found in use only after long search among the Landes, or the dunes of Brittany, and only the ghosts of postilions career upon the moonlit roads, — it is consule Planco with a vengeance to think how Dickens and Thackeray first travelled through France. Where

now is Astley's? And where Franconi's? All sawdust and ashes, I suppose. Yet Dickens found the French postilions in their cutaway jackets to be "something like the courier of St. Petersburg in the circle at Astley's or Franconi's," you remember I am not a patron of the drama myself; does the courier of St. Petersburg ever ride the sawdust ring in our day?

Drawings by Rowlandson show us those old French postboys in their "immense jack-boots, sometimes a century old." The pair of jack-boots which Dickens described must have been fashioned in the years when Maurice de Saxe went blazing about Europe, a meteor of war. The postilion's boots were "so ludicrously disproportionate to the wearer's foot that the spur, which is put where his own heel comes, is generally half-way up the leg." Pigtailed and cocked-hatted ghosts of old postboys, cracking whips in the moonlight, and spurring with your apparent calves, whither do ye travel now? To what Lethean and anachronistic shores? But behind the bodies of those astral jockeys one rode into all the magic and art and chronicle of an unvulgarized

Europe, in days when Plancus was H.B.M. Consul abroad.

Boz pictures the journeying in those days for us so vividly, you remember:

"The man comes out of the stable with his whip in his hand and his shoes on, and brings out, in both hands, one boot at a time, which he plants on the ground by the side of his horse with great gravity, until everything is ready. When it is — and oh Heaven! the noise they make about it! — he gets into the boots, shoes and all, or is hoisted into them by a couple of friends; makes all the horses kick and plunge; cracks his whip like a madman; shouts, "En route — Hi!" and away we go. He is sure to have a contest with his horse before we have gone very far; and then he calls him a Thief and Brigand, and a Pig and whatnot; and beats him about the head as if he were made of wood."

Behind such cavaliers and steeds of endurance what curious vehicles used to traverse Europe, in days when George the Third was King at home! Milords in blue frock-coats with crinoline skirts, and horsey striped waist-coats, used to engage them. In my own poor wanderings a hired chariot has been called to me a "mylord," in parts of the central Midi of France. "Pairs d'Angleterre" were the great travellers of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries,

and it was to allure their rich custom that in every posting-town a Hôtel d'Angleterre set up its sign. In antique auberges you still may see on the wall the picture of "Une famille Anglaise à ane, voyageant dans les Alpes." What a delightful screed could be written about those Hôtels d'Angleterre, by-the-by! "Mylords à louer," I have read upon the walls of inns where an older inscription still tells that "on loge à pied et à cheval" —which is, at the latest, a Seventeenth-century invitation, before "coches" and diligences became usual. And there still are extant French inns incredibly old. You may yet house and eat in the Hôtel Ste. Marie, where St. Louis of France, Henry II of England, a Simon de Montfort, and Cœur de Lion himself descended, just within the gate of Rocamadour, in the black and yellow South. And what of the "Inn of the High Mother of God," at Chalons? In the Eighteenth century the most comfortable hotels of the mainland were to be found in France, and up to them came travelling vehicles as numerous perhaps, and certainly more picturesque, than the motor-cars which frequent them to-day. The mylord, the

chariot, the berline, the roomy, and low-swung sleeping-carriage, the hooded cabriolet for two, the fourgon, and the morose désobligeante, a closed carriage for one, passed along post-haste, from hotel to auberge, milord to milord, Cagliostro to Casanova, Fox to Young, Calais to the Alps, or Strasbourg to Bayonne. The lighter vehicles took to pieces, and were portered over mountain passes sometimes. You could land from the "packet" at Calais, climb into your hired chaise, make a bed of it if you chose, and be carried in it, sans interruption, to Bonn or Ravenna or Bordeaux. When Yorick wanted to travel from Calais, he went into the coachhouse at Dessein's, you remember, and chose his désobligeante himself. "Four months had elapsed since it had finished its career of Europe in the corner of Monsieur Dessein's coachyard, and, having sallied out thence but a vamped-up business at first, though it had been twice taken to pieces on Mont Sennis, it had not profited much by its adventures." Oh, the merry yarn of the désobligeante, by-the-by, and the unparsonical gleam in Yorick's eye! I have never seen a désobligeante, or a

postilion "in a tawny yellow jerkin," but there still are vehicles for hire in rural France which seem the handiwork of a lunatic coach-builder in a fury, and even in the palmy days of posting the carriages were often as ramshackle as the harness, and as ancient as Sterne's poor amours or the post-boys' boots.

Undergraduate Thackeray, on his fugitive trip to Paris — a thousand graduates who read will sympathise, and sigh! — would go straight through, day and night, I fancy — forty hours it took him, but no matter — not stopping, except for a meal, at the Hôtel de France in Montreuil-sur-Mer, that walled and embattled little bourg which is not now, nor ever was, "sur mer." To this day that delightful old inn is almost exactly what it must have been when Sterne, in mounting his voiture under the porte cochère, gave alms to many beggars and made a sentimental note of the deed. If Thackeray (who had, like his Barry Lyndon, "the finest natural taste for lace and china of any man alive") went into the kitchen of that inn, he would find on the walls and dressers rare faïence of old France, Strasbourg delft,

Desvres and Marseilles ware, "rose" platters, "coq" plates, Rouen basins, and what not; as one may find them there to-day, I can vouch for it. But they are not to be got and carried away, either for love or money, those relics of the potter's art consule Ludovico, let me warn. And your true collector never steals.

Dickens would bait his post-horses at Montreuil, but it is certain he did not visit Dessein's in 1844; for he landed at Boulogne, going from the Bull and Mouth near London Post Office to Boulogne Mouth in France. In Paris he would put up at Meurice's, but not the Hotel Meurice of to-day. But, south of Paris, and "En route, hi!" again, he stayed at the existent Hôtel de l'Écu, at Sens, one may be sure; for the fine old inn at Sens answers to his description of it to this very day. Happy even yet the traveller who sees the cathedral-tower of Sens stand up tall, like a beacon in water, and skirts and crosses the pleasant river Yonne, and comes with crack of whip and "Houp!" and "Hué, donc!" in almost a diligence of an omnibus from the gare to that jolly hôtel. But I never met more than one Englishman

at Sens, and he was a clergyman, come in almost a professional capacity, to view the cathedral on which the designer of Canterbury choir tried his 'prentice hand.

Consule Planco, one came to Sens in style, I can tell you! What is a motor-car full of modernity to this?

"The ninety-six bells upon the horses — twenty-four apiece — have been ringing sleepily in your ears for half an hour or so, when, down at the end of the long avenue of trees through which you are travelling, the first indication of a town appears, in the shape of some straggling cottages; and the carriage begins to rattle and roll over a horribly uneven pavement —"

the very "pavé" which British bicyclists curse as they go in and out of old French towns to-day; very jolting to the spine it is, I allow. And then —

"As if the equipage were a great firework, and the mere sight of a smoking cottage chimney had lighted it, instantly it begins to crack and splutter, as if the very devil were in it. Crack, crack, crack, crack. Crack — crack — crack! Hélo! Holà! Vite! Voleur! Brigand! Hi, hi, hi! En r-r-r-r-route! Rumble, rumble, rumble; clatter, clatter, clatter; crick, crick, crick; and here we are in the yard of the Hôtel de l'Écu d'Or, used up, gone out, smoking, spent, exhausted; but sometimes making a false start unexpectedly, with nothing coming of it — like a firework to the last!"

Booksellers' Row is consule Planco now, more 's the pity, for only very inferior bargain-boxes can be found in the Charing Cross Road. But out of a sixpenny box there I recently picked a relic of old Continental travel. It is a work by the worthy Karl Baedeker, — still published, I believe — mine was all but new, and the "stereotype edition;" the "Traveller's Manual of Conversation," to wit. And listen how Milords used to have to talk abroad, on the Grand Tour. "Is the road safe? Do you ever hear of robbers? Are the postilions insolent? Is the road over the mountains very steep? I have my own carriage, can I hire horses reasonably? Are the horses come? Have you put a chain round the trunk? Take these two hats, and put them in the net; put this cane and this umbrella into the case, and these shoes into the boot. Postilion, mind you go slowly when the road is bad, and when you make a turn. Postilion, stop! We wish to get down; a spoke of one of the wheels is broken, some of the harness is undone, one of the horse's shoes is come off. It begins to get dark, do you mean to keep us here in the middle of the

road all night?" And listen again, how they went aboard ship, consule Planco. "Get into the boat, gentlemen, take care not to hurt yourselves. I think the sea is very rough. The vessel is a great way out, and if a gale of wind comes on the boat may be upset. My head is very bad, the smell of the tar afflicts me. Drink some Hollands, it will strengthen your stomach. I think we ought to see the coast now, we have been ten hours on the way already." That was how they went over from Queenborough to Flushing, or Deal to Dunkirk.

But in those days "the Batavier steamboat left the Tower stairs," containing "Sir John and my lady with a dozen children and corresponding nursemaids; and the great grandee Bareacres family, that sat by themselves near the wheel, stared at everybody, and spoke to no one. Their carriages, emblazoned with coronets, and heaped with shining imperials, were on the foredeck, locked in. There was Sir John's great carriage that would hold thirteen people; my Lord Methuselah's carriage, my Lord Bareacres' chariot, britska, and fourgon. 'À qui cette voiture là?' said one gentleman courier

with a large morocco money-bag and ear-rings, to another with ear-rings and a large morocco money-bag."

For mind you, consule Planco a Continental journey was an exploration, of almost African wildness, in which you positively *must* be guided and protected by a courrier particulier if you would be anything like safe, or were anybody that was anybody at all. The Dickens' family coach came lumbering to Sens in the charge of a very notable and famous courier indeed, the "best of servants and most beaming of men." And, "truth to say, he looked a good deal more patriarchal than I, who in the shadow of his portly presence dwindled to no account at all," we read in the "Pictures from Italy." The landlord of the Hôtel de l'Écu d'Or dotes to that extent on the courier, that he can hardly wait for his coming down from the box, but embraces his very legs and boot-heels as he descends. "My courier! My brave courier! My friend! My brother!" The landlady loves him, the femme-de-chambre blesses him, the garçon worships him. The courier asks if his letter has been received? It has, it has! Are the rooms

prepared? They are, they are! The best rooms for my courier; the rooms of State for my courier; the whole house is at the service of my best of friends! The courier "carries a green leather purse outside his coat, suspended by a belt. The idlers look at it; one touches it. It is full of five-franc pieces. Murmurs of admiration are heard. The landlord falls upon the courier's neck, and folds him to his breast!" Then the family — the Dickenses, or the Dorrits, or the Dombeys taking a change from Brighton, with Paul in a tasselled cap and the ladies green-veiled and parasolled — get out of the carriage and explore the inn. "The whole party are in motion! The brave courier in particular is everywhere; looking after the beds, having wine poured down his throat by his dear brother the landlord, and picking up green cucumbers — always cucumbers; heaven knows where he gets them, — with which he walks about, one in each hand, like truncheons." But whither, alas! have vanished all such gallant couriers now?

I once had the honour to know a courier myself, but he is dead. He died in 1887, cherishing a particular hatred for "Cook's"

—not cooks; cooks with a small "c" he loved like a brother, indeed—to the last. "Cook's" had ruined him and all his tribe, he swore by Saint Fiacre; he died, and we shall not look upon his like again. To the shades of bygone explorers of Europe,—Evelyn, Walpole, Young, Sterne, Turner, Thackeray, Dickens, and their couriers I consecrate this pious and votive offering of sympathy and lament. They are gone, with their century and their Europe; gone, the romantic discomfort of old travel; gone, the pig-tails and jack-boots and festive guides; gone, the mouldering beauty of unrestored antique edifices; gone, the simple but stately "ease in mine inn." Consule Planco, the world was stranger, Europe was more vivid and alluring, than it is now. Swiftly the time is coming when even a steam-railway shall be a piece of archæology; I think there is no true man alive who does not regret such vanishings; and it is precious small comfort to know that some day our degenerate age shall be consule Planco in its turn.

Tenez, mes amis, this blatant Twentieth century notwithstanding, let us get back to the days when Victoria was newly queen.

Let us mount the Diligence "with the dusty outsiders in blue frocks, like butchers, and the insides in white nightcaps," or "the Malle Poste with only a couple of passengers or so" — ourselves — "tearing along at a real good dare-devil pace" into the night. And we will come to Avignon as the very Dickenses did, by the white and winding river-road in the morning, and we will see the grapes hang in clusters in the streets, and the brilliant oleanders everywhere in full blow. We will spy the "bright stuffs and handkerchiefs, ancient frames of carved wood, old chairs, ghostly tables, saints, virgin, angels, and staring daubs of portraits exposed for sale," and amongst them all it shall go hard if your needle-sharp eye detects no treasure-trove, friend Hobbinol, thou impish but invaluable guide of the collector! We will be astir as early as six the next morning, and as we finish breakfast the horses will come jingling into the yard. The brav' courier tells us that all is ready, and we all get in. But all is not ready yet, for the brav' courier must run into the hostel again, to pack up a parcel of cold fowl, sliced ham, bread and biscuits. What has he got in his

hand *now?* More cucumbers? No, a long strip of paper. It is the Bill, the mountainous Bill. He has two belts on this morning, has our courier, one supporting the Purse, the other a mighty good sort of leathern bottle that is filled to the throat with the best light Bordeaux in the cellars. He never pays the Bill till the Bottle is full. Then he disputes the Bill. Of course he does; and then he touches his noble commission; it was dear travelling when Becky Sharp went abroad!

But now the brav' courier jumps up to the box seat, all of a sudden, as if with a desperate resolve. And now, like Napoleon at Marengo, the brav' courier magnificently gives the word. "Allez! Tout de go!" In three mere minutes we have passed the carved cross and the peasant devoutly kneeling below it, at the skirt of the town; in five we are out in the no man's land of the riverside country. We exult: the selfish old Adam and ego within us rejoices at our luck. We will pity the unhappiest and aid the neediest, but — Hi! Allez! Make room there. We are off on our wander-years again; again we are on the road!

The Bibelot

"I *THINK I told you I had postponed my volume of Nature Essays until February. Its provisional title* Nature and Dream *will then probably be relinquished for* Where the Forest Murmurs *after the first paper in the book.*" *I quote this from the last letter Fiona Macleod wrote me under date of November 17, 1905. Within less than a month "the deep music of immortal things" heard in almost everything "Fiona" wrote became an undying reality to her: instead of the shadow she had reached the substance and the source of all inspiration. This deepening diapason of life as Sharp grew older is most fully revealed in the book just mentioned, and thus it is in taking for our selection these essays from* Where the Forest Murmurs [1] *we are but following an ancient pathway of peace*

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1 *Lovers of Fiona Macleod may wish to know that Mr. Mosher can procure for them* At the Turn of the Year, Essays and Nature Thoughts from the Writings of Fiona Macleod. *Crown 8vo., Buckram, g. t. F. N. Foulis, London, 1913. It contains 12 illustrations in color by the late Hannah C. Preston Macgoun, and is a volume of great and enduring beauty.*

beyond which "the grey waste looms in the silence of immemorial mystery." In connexion with this last book, published posthumously in the spring of 1909, an earlier letter addressed to me is cited in the Memoir.[2] *Under date of February 11th, 1903, he wrote: "Dubious and ever varying health, with much going to and fro in quest of what is perhaps not to be found (for mere change of climate will not give health unless other conditions combine to bring about the miracle) have, among other causes, prevented my writing to you as I had intended, or, indeed, from doing much writing of any kind. I have written a few articles for* Country Life — *and little else, published or unpublished.*[3] *The days go by and I say 'at night' — and every night I am too tired or listless, and say 'to-morrow':*

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2 *See* William Sharp (Fiona Macleod) A Memoir *compiled by his wife, Elizabeth A. Sharp. 2 vols. Crown 8vo., New York, 1912. Vol. II, p. 284.*

3 *The contents of* Where the Forest Murmurs, *with other verse and prose, first appeared in* Country Life *for 1904 and 1905, and Sharp had planned to issue the Nature Essays, in two, or possibly, later on in three volumes. "Concerning the titular essay Mr. Alfred Noyes wrote: 'It is one of those pieces of nature-study which, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, have that rarest of all modern qualities' — 'Healing Power.'" See* Memoir, *Vol. II, p. 282. See also* The Bibelot, *Vol. XIII, pp. 317-344.*

and so both the nights and the morrows go to become thistles in the Valley of Oblivion. But with the advancing Spring I am regathering somewhat of lost energy, and if only I were back in Scotland I believe I should be hard at work. Well, I shall be there soon, though I may be away again, in the remote isles or in Scandinavia for the late spring and summer. . . . 'F. M.'"

I know not how I can take final leave of William Sharp better than by quoting the close of Mrs. Sharp's beautiful Memoir: *"To live in beauty—which is to put into four words all the dream and spiritual effort of the soul of man." That was, indeed, what he attempted and, as it seems to those of us who loved him, had succeeded in doing.*

He died at Maniace in Sicily at the home of his friend the Duke of Bronte "on the morning of the twelfth" [*of December, 1905,*]—"*a day of wild storm, wind, thunder and rain. . . . . With characteristic swiftness he turned his eager mind from the life that was closing to the life of greater possibilites that he knew awaited him. About 3 o'clock, with his devoted friend Alec Hood by his side, he suddenly leant forward with shining eyes and exclaimed in a tone of joyous recognition,*

'Oh, the beautiful Green Life again!' and the next moment sank back in my arms with the contented sigh, 'Ah, all is well.'"

"On the 14th, in an hour of lovely sunshine, the body was laid to rest in a little woodland burial-ground on the hillside within sound of the Simeto: as part of the short service, his own 'Invocation to Peace,' from The Dominion of Dreams, *was read over the grave by the Duke of Bronte. Later, an Iona cross, carved in lava, was placed there, and on it this inscription, chosen by himself:*

Farewell to the known and exhausted,
Welcome the unknown and illimitable.

W. S.

and

Love is more great than we conceive, and Death is the keeper of unknown redemptions.

F. M."

FOR NOVEMBER:
THREE ESSAYS
BY HILAIRE BELLOC.

WHERE THE FOREST MURMURS:
TWO NATURE ESSAYS
I. STILL WATERS
II. THE RAINY HYADES
By
FIONA MACLEOD.

"I seek beauty, not beautiful things," is the burden of Sharp's self analysis. If this phrase is meaningful, if there is such a thing as beauty in the abstract, a sort of fourth dimension of Art that exists apart from the operation of the senses, if in a word beauty is something more than the spirit of beautiful things that are and the promise of beautiful things to be, then to these very writings of Fiona Macleod we may turn for a possible proof of his apparent paradox. For these same tales that conform to no canons of the literary art are yet brimful of a spiritul beauty, a silvery emanation of the poet's mind caught in the loose net of words that he flings forth upon the tide of dreams and thoughts, those dreams and thoughts that are, in his own words "children of the wind, ministers of a mind wrought in shadow, doing the will of beauty and regret."

From an unpublished essay by
CYRIL BRETHERTON.

DEEP peace, I breathe into you,
O weariness, here :
O ache, here !
Deep peace, a soft white dove to you ;
Deep peace, a quiet rain to you ;
Deep peace, an ebbing wave to you !
Deep peace, red wind of the east from you ;
Deep peace, grey wind of the west to you ;
Deep peace, dark wind of the north from you ;
Deep peace, blue wind of the south to you !
Deep peace, pure red of the flame to you ;
Deep peace, pure white of the moon to you ;
Deep peace, pure green of the grass to you ;
Deep peace, pure brown of the earth to you ;
Deep peace, pure grey of the dew to you,
Deep peace, pure blue of the sky to you !
Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Deep peace of the sleeping stones to you !
Deep peace of the Yellow Shepherd to you,
Deep peace of the Wandering Shepherdess to you,
Deep peace of the Flock of Stars to you,
Deep peace from the Son of Peace to you,
Deep peace from the heart of Mary to you,
And from Bridget of the Mantle
Deep peace, deep peace !
And with the kindness too of the Haughty Father,
Peace !
In the name of the Three who are One,
Peace !
And by the will of the King of the Elements,
Peace ! Peace !

F. M.

I.

STILL WATERS.

PERHAPS at no season of the year is the beauty of still waters at once so obvious and so ethereal as in Autumn. All the great painters of Nature have realised this crowning secret of their delicate loveliness. Corot exclaimed to a friend who was in raptures about one of his midsummer river scenes . . . "Yes, yes, but to paint the soul of October, *voilà mon idéal!*" Daubigny himself, that master of slow winding waters and still lagoons, declared that if he had to be only one month out of his studio it would have to be October, "for then you can surprise Nature when she is dreaming, then you may learn her most evanescent and most exquisite secrets." And our own Millais, when he was painting "Chill October" near Murthly, in Perthshire, wrote that nothing had ever caused him so much labour, if nothing had ever given him so much pleasure, in the painting, "for Nature now can be found in a trance, and you can see her as she is." A friend of the late Keeley Halswelle told me that this able artist (who was originally a "figure" and "subject" painter)

remarked to him that he had never realised the supreme charm of autumnal Nature among still waters till he found himself one day trying to translate to his canvas the placid loveliness of the wide, shallow reaches of the Avon around Christchurch. Doubtless many other painters, French and Dutch and English, have felt thus, and been glad to give their best to the interpretation of the supreme charm of still waters in Autumn. What would Venice be without them . . . Amsterdam . . . Holland . . . Finland . . . Sweden? Imagine Scotland without this water-beauty, from Loch Ken to Loch Maree, from the Loch of the Yowes to the "thousand-waters" of Benbecula: or Ireland, where the white clouds climbing out of the south may mirror themselves in still waters all day till they sink beyond the Lough of Shadows in the silent north.

The phrase is as liberal as "running water." That covers all inland waters in motion, from the greatest rivers to the brown burn of the hillside, from the melting of the snows in fierce spate to the swift invasion and troubled floods of the hurrying and confined tides. So "still waters" covers

lakes and mountain-lochs, shallow meres, lagoons, the reaches of slow rivers, lochans, tarns, the dark brown pools in peat-moors, or the green-blue pools in open woods and shadowy forests, the duckweed-margined ponds at the skirts of villages, the lilied ponds of old manor-garths and of quiet gardens, asleep beneath green canopies or given over to the golden carp and the dragon-fly beneath mossed fountains or beyond time-worn terraces. Often, too, and in February and October above all, the low-lying lands are flooded, and the bewildered little lives of the pastures crowd the hedgerows and copses. Sometimes for days, motionless, these mysterious lake-arrivals abide under the grey sky, sometimes a week or weeks pass before they recede. The crow flying home at dusk sees the pale cloud and the orange afterglow reflected in an inexplicable mirror where of late the grey-green grass and brown furrow stretched for leagues: the white owl, hawking the pastures after dusk, swoops so low on his silent wings that he veers upward from a ghostly flying image underneath, as a bat at sundown veers from the phantom of its purblind flight.

Delicate haze, cloud-dappled serenity, and moonlight are the three chief qualities of beauty in the charm of still waters. It is a matter of temperament, of the hour and occasion also no doubt, whether one prefer those where another dream-world, that of human life, companions, them in the ineffable suspense of the ideal moment, the moment where the superfluous recedes and silence and stillness consummate the miraculous vision. Those moonlit lagoons of Venice, which become scintillating floods of silver or lakes of delicate gold, where the pole-moored *sandolò* thrusts a black wedge of shadow into the motionless drift, while an obscure figure at the prow idly thrums a mandolin or hums drowsily a *canzonnetto d'amore;* those twilit canals where old palaces lean and look upon their ancient beauty stilled and perfected in sleep; how unforgettable they are, how they thrill even in remembrance. In the cities of Holland, how at one are the old houses with the mirroring canals, in still afternoons when quiet light warms the red wall, and dwells on the brown and scarlet clematis in the cool violet and amber hollows of the motionless water

wherein the red wall soundlessly slips and indefinitely recedes, hiding an undiscovered house of shadow with silent unseen folk dreaming out across invisible gardens. There are ancient towns like this in England also, as between Upsala and Elsinore to where old Châteaux in Picardy guard the pollarded marais or deserted Breton manoirs stand ghostly at the forest-end of untraversed meres.

These have their charm. But have they for us the intimate and unchanging spell of the lakes and meres and other still waters of our own land? Nothing, one might think, could be more beautiful than to see in the Lake of Como the cypresses of Bellaggio and the sloping gardens of Cadenabbia meeting in a new underwater wonderland: or to see Mont Blanc, forty miles away, sleeping in snow-held silence in the blue depths of Lac Léman: or to see Pilatus and a new city of Lucerne mysteriously changed and yet familiarly upbuilded among the moving green lawns and azure avenues of the Lake of the Four Cantons. And yet leaning boulders of granite, yellow with lichen and grey with moss and deep-based among swards of

heather and the green nomad bracken, will create a subtler magic in the brown depths of any Highland loch. There is a subtler spell in the solitary tarn, where the birch leans out of the fern and throws an intricate tracery of bough and branch into the unmoving wave, where the speckled trout and the speckled mavis meet as in the strange companionships of dreams. Enchantment lies amid the emerald glooms of pine and melancholy spruce, when a dream-world forest underneath mirrors the last sunset-gold on bronze cones, and enfolds the one white wandering cloud miraculously stayed at last between two columnar green spires, flawless as sculptured jade.

Is this because, in the wilderness, we recover something of what we have lost? . . . because we newly find ourselves, as though surprised into an intimate relationship of which we have been unaware or have indifferently ignored? What a long way the ancestral memory has to go, seeking, like a pale sleuth-hound among obscure dusks and forgotten nocturnal silences, for the lost trails of the soul. It is not we only, you and I, who look into the still waters of the wil-

derness and lonely places, and are often dimly perplext, are often troubled we know not how or why: some forgotten reminiscence in us is aroused, some memory not our own but yet our heritage is perturbed, footsteps that have immemorially sunk in ancient dust move furtively along obscure corridors in our brain, the ancestral hunter or fisher awakes, the primitive hillman or woodlander communicates again with old forgotten intimacies and the secret oracular things of lost wisdoms. This is no fanciful challenge of speculation. In the order of psychology it is as logical as in the order of biology is the tracing of our upright posture or the deft and illimitable use of our hands, from unrealisably remote periods wherein the pioneers of man reached slowly forward to inconceivable arrivals.

But whatever primitive wildness, whatever ancestral nearness we recover in communion with remote Nature, there is no question as to the fascination of beauty exercised by the still waters of which we speak, of their enduring spell. What lovelier thing in Nature than, on a serene and cloudless October day, to come upon a small lake surrounded by tall

elms of amber and burnished bronze, by beech and maple and sycamore cloudy with superb fusion of orange and scarlet and every shade of red and brown, by limes and aspens tremulous with shaken pale gold? Beautiful in itself, in rare and dreamlike beauty, the woods become more beautiful in this silent marriage with placid waters, take on a beauty more rare, a loveliness more dreamlike. There is a haze which holds the fluent gold of the air. Silence is no longer quietude as in June; or a hushed stillness, as in the thunder-laden noons of July or August; but a soundless suspense wherein the spirit of the world, suddenly at rest, sleeps and dreams.

The same ineffable peace broods over all still waters: on the meres of Hereford, on the fens of East Anglia, on lochs heavy with mountain-shadow, on the long grey Hebridean sheets where the call of the sea-wind or the sea-wave is ever near.

Truly there must be a hidden magic in them, as old tales tell. I recall one where the poets and dreamers of the world are called "the children of pools." The poet and dreamer who so called them must have

meant by his metaphor those who look into the hearts of men and into the dim eyes of Life, troubled by the beauty and mystery of the world, insatiable in longing for the ineffable and the unattainable. So, long ago, even "ornamental waters" may have been symbols of the soul's hunger and thirst, emblems of the perpetual silence and mystery of his fugitive destiny!

Somewhere, I think it is in the *Kalevala*, occurs the beautiful metaphor of still waters, "the mirrors of the world." Whoever the ancient singer was who made the phrase, he had in his heart love for still waters as well as the poet's mind. The secret of their beauty is in that image. It may be a secret within a secret, for the mirror may disclose a world invisible to us, may reflect what our own or an ancestral memory dimly recalls, may reveal what the soul perceives and translates from its secret silences into symbol and the mysterious speech of the imagination.

Still Waters; it has the inward music that lies in certain words. . . amber, ivory, foam, silence, dreams; that lies often in some marriage of words . . . moonlight at sea, wind in dark woods, dewy pastures, old sorrowful

things: that dwells in some names of things, as chrysoprase; or in some combination of natural terms and associations, as wind and wave; or in some names of women and dreams, Ruth, Alaciel, Imogen, Helen, Cleopatra; or in the words that serve in the courts of music. . . cadence, song, threnody, epithalamion, viol, flute, prelude, fugue. One can often evade the heavy airs of the hours of weariness by the spell of one of these wooers of dreams. *Foam* — and the hour is gathered up like mist, and we are amid "perilous seas in faëry lands forlorn:" *Wind* — and the noises of the town are like the humming of wild bees in old woods, and one is under ancient boughs, listening, or standing solitary in the dusk by a forlorn shore with a tempestuous sea filling the darkness with whispers and confused rumours and incommunicable things: *Ruth* — and sorrow and exile are become loveliness: *Helen* — and that immemorial desire is become *our* desire, and that phantom beauty is become *our* dream and *our* passion. *Still Waters* — surely through that gate the mind may slip away from the tedious and unwelcome, and be alone among forests where the

birch leans and dreams into an amber-brown pool, or by a mountain-lake where small white clouds lie like sleeping birds, or on moonlit lagoons where the reed and the reed's image are as one, and the long mirrors are unshaken by any wandering air, unvisited but by the passing soundless shadows of travelling wings.

II.

THE RAINY HYADES.

"Where is the star Imbrifer? Let us adore it."

YEARS ago I remember coming upon this mysterious phrase in a poem or poetic drama by a French writer. The pagans, led by a priest, then went into the woods; and, in a hollow made of a hidden place swept by great boughs, worshipped a moist star. I forget whether the scourge of drought ended then, and if winds lifted the stagnant branches, if rains poured through the leaves and mosses and reached the well-springs. I recall only the invocation, and some faint and broken memory of the twilight-procession of bitter hearts and wild voices, weary of vain lamentation and of unanswered prayers to sleeping or silent gods. But often I wondered as to Imbrifer, that dark lord with the sonorous name. Was he a Gaulish divinity, or, as his name signals, a strayed Latin? And was he, as our Manan of the West, a sea-deity, or a divinity of the clouds, clothed, like the shepherd Angus Sunlocks, in mist, so as the more secretly to drive before him down the hidden ways of heaven

the myriad hosts of the rain? Or had he an angelic crest, with wings of unfalling water, as a visionary once portrayed for me a likeness of Midir, that ancient Gaelic god at whose coming came and still come the sudden dews, or whose presence or the signs of whose passage would be revealed and still are revealed by the white glisten on thickets and grasses, by the moist coolness on the lips of leaf and flower.

The name, too, or one very like it, I heard once in a complicated (and, alas, for the most part forgotten) tale of the Kindred of Manan, the Poseidon of the Gael: remembered because of the singular companionship of three or four other Latin-sounding names, which the old Schoolmaster-teller may have invented or himself introduced, or mayhap had in the sequence of tradition from some forgotten monkish reciter of old. Aquarius and either Cetus or Delphinius (quaintly given as the Pollack, the porpoise) were of the astronomical company, I remember — and Neptheen or Nepthuinn (Neptune), notwithstanding his oneness with Manan's self.

But Imbrifer had faded from my mind, as though washed away by one of his waves of

rain or obliterated by one of his dense mists, till the other day. Then, as it happened, I came upon the name once more, in a Latin quotation in an old book. So, he was of the proud Roman clan after all! and, by the context, clearly a divinity of the autumnal rains, and of those also that at the vernal equinox are as a sound of innumerable little clapping hands.

Could he be an astronomical figure, a Zodiacal prince of dominion, I wondered. In vain I searched through all available pages connected with the Hyades, the Stars of Water: in vain, the chronicles of Aquarius, of Cetus and the Dolphin, of Hydra and Pisces and Argo, that proud Ship of March. But last night, sitting by the fire and hearing the first sleet of Winter whistle through the dishevelled oaks and soughing firs, when I was idly reading and recalling broken clues in connection with the astrological "House of Seturn," suddenly, in pursuit of a cross-reference to some detail in connection with the constellation of Capricorn, I encountered Imbrifer once more. "Imbrifer, the Rain-Bringing One."

So, then, he is more than an obscure

divinity of the woods and of remote ancestral clans! Greater even than Midir of the Dews, one of the great Lords of Death: greater than the Greek Poseidon or the Gaelic Manan, heaven-throned among the older gods though seen of mortals only on gigantic steeds of ocean, vast sea-green horses with feet of running waves and breasts of billows. For he is no other than one of the mightiest of the constellations, Capricorn itself! The name, in a word, is but one of several more or less obscure or forgotten analogues of this famous constellation, concerning which the first printed English astrological almanac (1386) has "whoso is born in Capcorn schal be ryche and wel lufyd!"

Imbrifer himself . . . or itself . . . is certainly not "wel lufyd" on many of these October and November days of floods and rains! *Imbrifer* . . . the very name is a kind of stately, Miltonic, autumnal compeer of our insignificant (and, in Scotland, dreaded!) rain-saint of July, Swithin of dubious memory! It would add dignity to the supplication or imprecation of the sleet-whipt citizen of Edinburgh or the rain-and-

mud splashed wayfarer in London, during the wet and foggy days of November, if, instead of associating the one or the other with "the weather" or "our awful climate" he could invoke or abjure so imposing and grandiloquent an abstraction as "Imbrifer!"

Truly a fit Constellation of late Autumn, Capricornus.

> "Thy Cold, for Thou o'er Winter Signs dost reign,
> Pullst back the Sun . . ."

as a bygone astronomical versifier has it. Perhaps he had in mind Horace's "tyrannus Hesperiae Capricornus undae," who in turn may have recalled an earlier poet still, English'd thus:

> ". . . Then grievous blasts
> Break southward on the Sea, when coincide
> The *Goat* and *Sun*: and then a heaven-sent cold."

Many of us will remember with a thrill Milton's magnificent image

> ". . . Thence down amain
> As deep as Capricorn,"

and others will recall the often-quoted line of Dante in the *Paradiso* (relative to the

Sun's entrance into Capricorn between January 18 and February 14).

"The horn of the Celestial Goat doth touch the Sun."

May and November are the two "fatal" months with the Celtic peoples: the first because of the influence of the Queen of Faerie (she has many names), and the second because of Midir, who sleeps in November, or, as another legend has it, "goes away" in that month. In that month too the Daughter of Midir has departed on her long quest of her brother Aluinn Og (is this a legend or a confused traditionary remembrance, or a mythopoeic invention . . . I have come upon it once only), to find him asleep under the shaken fans of the Northern Lights, and to woo him with pale arctic fires, and auroras, and a faint music wrought out of the murmur of polar airs on a harp made of a seal's breastbone. It is but in another guise the old Greek legend of Persephone in the Kingdom of Aidoneus. Again, it is in November that the touch of Dalua, the Secret Fool or the Accursed of the Everlasting Ones, gives death. Once more, it is in November that Lîr holds his great

banquet, a banquet that lasts three months, in Tir-fo-tuinn, the Country under the waves. In one way or another all these dreams are associated with the sea, with water and the Winter Solstice. By different ways of thought, of tradition, and of dreaming phantasy, the minds of this race or that people, of these scattered tribes or those broken clans, have reached the same strange goals of the imagination. The spell of Capricorn may be of the Waters of all time, since the Horned Goat of our Celtic forbears, the "Buccan Horn" of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, the Latin "Imbrifer" or "Gelidus" or "Sea-Goat" (in several variants), the Greek "Athalpees" or the commoner term signifying a Horned Goat, the ancient Egyptian Chnemu, God of the Waters, the perhaps as ancient Aztec Cipactli, imaged like the narwhal, the Chinese Mo Ki and the Assyrian Munaxa, both signifying Goat Fish — and so forth, East and West, in the dim past and the confused present, — are all directly or indirectly associated with the element of Water, with the Sea, or rains, storm and change and subtle regeneration. The Greek writers called the allied constellation of

Aquarius Hydrochoüs, the Water-Pourer, in mythological connection (a Latin commentator avers) with Deucalion and the great Flood, that many believe to have been an ancestral memory of the Deluge which submerged Atlantis. The Anglo-Saxons gave it the same name, "se waeter-gyt." There is a Breton legend in connection with Ys, that dim Celtic remembrance of vanished Lyonesse or drowned Atlantis, to the effect (for I know it only in modern guise) that on the fatal night when King Gradlon saw his beautiful city unloosened to the devouring waves by Dahut the Red, his Daughter, the Stars of water shook a fiery rain upon land and sea and that the floods of heaven fell, from the wake of the Great Galley (the Great Bear) to the roots of the unseen tree that bears the silver Apples (the Pleiades), and as far as the hidden Well-springs (*the Constellation of Capricorn*) and The Mansion of the White King (the Constellation of Aquarius) — the White King being water personified.

Nearly all the ancient Greek and Asian analogues for the last named, Aquarius, relate to water. One of the few old-world exceptions was that Roman Zodiac on which

the constellation figured as a peacock, symbol of Hêrê (Juno), because that in her month Gamelion (part January, part February) the sun enters this sign. The Greek Islanders of Ceos called it Aristaeus, in memory of a native Rain Bringer. Another name was Cecrops, because the Cicada or Field-cricket is nourished by the dews and has its eggs hatched by the vernal rains. It would be wearisome to collate superfluous instances. Enough, now, that the Arab, the Persian, the Syrian and the Israelite, were at one with the Hellene and the Anglo-Saxon in the designation of the Water-Pourer, or an equivalent such as the Arabian *Al Dalw*, the Well-Bucket: that in China of old its sign was recognised as a symbol of the Emperor Tchoun Hin, the Chinese Deucalion: and that still among the astrologers of Central Asia and Japan it has for emblem the Rat, the far-Asiatic ideograph for water. Strange too that Star-Seers so remote as the Magi of the East and the Druids of the West should centrate their stellar science on this particular constellation. And, once more, not less strange that alike by the banks of the Euphrates where it was called

the Star of Mighty Destiny, on the Arabian Sands, where it was called the Fortune of all Fortune, and in the Druidic woods of the Gaul and the Gael where too it symbolised Fortune, a star of its group should be the Star of Fortune — the group alluded to by Dante in the *Purgatorio:*

> ". . . geomancers their Fortuna Major
> See in the Orient before the dawn . . ."

Again, is it tradition or coincidence that the Platonists of old held "the stairs of Capricorn" to be the stellar way by which the souls of men ascended to heaven, so that the constellation became known as the Gate of the Gods, and that to-day the astrologers and mystics of the West share the same belief? Even the Caer Arianrod of our Celtic forbears — the Silver Road, as generally given though obviously very loosely . . . and may not the name more likely, especially in connection with a basic legend of the constellation of Corona Borealis, be the "Mansion of Ariand" (Ariadne)? . . . though commonly applied to the Milky Way or less often to the Northern Crown, is sometimes

in its modern equivalent used to designate Capricorn. Naturally, to astrologers, this Constellation with that of Aquarius, is of greatest import, for at a certain time "the House of Saturn" is here to be discerned.

It is a drop from such sounding names as these to "the Skinker." Yet by this name our English forefathers probably knew in common speech the constellation of Aquarius. At any rate a Mr. Cock, "Philomathemat," in a rare book of some two hundred years ago, *Meteorologiae*, speaks of Aquarius by this singular name, and as though it were the familiar and accepted designation: "Jupiter in the Skinker opposed by Saturn in the Lion did raise mighty Southwest Winds." Here again in this old English word, meaning a tapster, we have an analogue of the Water-Pourer, that universal Zodiacal sign of Aquarius.

But for all that Horace, and following him James Thomson in the *Seasons* ("Winter"), say of "Fierce Aquarius staining the inverted year," the constellation is more associated with the rain-tides of Spring. It is then, too, in mid-February to mid-March, that, following its passage through Capricorn, the

Sun enters it—so that "benign" and not "fierce" becomes the apt epithet.

All these "watery constellations"—Aquarius, Capricorn, Cetus, the Dolphin, Hydra, Pisces—are set aside, in the mouths of poets and in the familiar lore of the many, for the Hyades, that lovely sestet of Taurus which in these winter-months are known to all of us, where they flash and dance south-east of the Silver Apples of childhood's sky—the clustered Pleiades. They have become the typical stars of the onset of winter—the Lords of Rain—"sad companions of the turning year" as an old Roman poet calls them, "the seaman-noted Hyades" of Euripides, "the Boar-Throng" (feeders on the mast brought down in late October and November by the autumnal rains) of our Anglo-Saxon fathers, the "Storm-Star" of Pliny, the Moist Daughters of Spenser, so much more familiar to us in Tennyson's

> "Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
> Vext the dim sea."

Of old the whole group was called Aldebaran, but now we recognise in that name only the superb star whose pale-rose flame lights

gloriously "the cold forehead of the wintry sky" to quote an undeservedly forgotten poet. And now, Aldebaran stands apart in Taurus, and the six storm-stars are torches set apart.

Well, the Season of the Rainy Hyades has come. The Water-Pourer, the Whale and swift Dolphin, Pisces ("Leaders of the Celestial Host" and "the Diadem of November"), Hydra the Water-Snake, every Rain-Star, from flashing Corona, Bride of the White Hawk, to the far southern torch of splendid Achernar in Eridanus the Celestial River, all have lent the subtle influences of the first of the Elements, Water. In the mystic's language, we are now in the season when the soul may least confusedly look into its life as in a shaken mirror, and when the spirit may "look before and after." For, they tell us, in the occult sense, we are the Children of Water.

To-night, looking at the Hyades, dimmed in a vaporous haze foretelling coming storm, as yet afar off, I find myself, I know not why, and in a despondency come I know not whence, thinking of and repeating words I read to-day in a translation of the *Bhagavad-*

Gîtâ :— "I am in the hearts of all. Memory and Knowledge, and the loss of both, are all from Me. There are two entities in this world, the Perishable and the Imperishable. All creatures are the Perishable and the unconcerned One is the Imperishable."

The unconcerned One!

The Bibelot

I VOWED to get even with Master Hilaire Belloc some few years ago for a quaint little trick put upon me at that time, long since forgiven, as I hope and believe, wherein he was the aggressor and I the aggrieved. I shall not condescend to a detailed statement of my wrongs but proceed promptly and prettily to the revenge I had laid up in store for him. If I did not so pay my respects I should be lacking both in courage and courtesy of which virtues the last has been well besung by Master Belloc himself. That is to say:

> "Of Courtesy, it is much less
> Than Courage of Heart or Holiness,
> Yet in my Walks it seems to me
> That the Grace of God is in Courtesy."

It would ill become me to add jibe to jesting yet I must cite, and he may sing an' he will, another couplet from the same poem:

> "He was so small, you could not see
> His large intent of Courtesy."

Jest and jollity aside Hilaire Belloc is both wonder and wild desire when you come to know him at his best. Fortunately no threat or fear of copyright proceedings

shall deter me from showing him at this top notch of literary excellence, and in reprinting these three essays I even up the score and thank him duly and truly for the chance of doing so.

A recent reviewer, Mr. Burnell Payne, has paid Mr. Belloc no undeserved tribute when citing from The Path to Rome *he said: "This is great writing; but, after all, his first sight of the Alps is an experience that should inspire any poet, and in my opinion Mr. Belloc's most distinct achievement—and perhaps his greatest service to his generation—is that, better than any writer of the day, he has understood and set down in words the character of England." He then mentions* At the Sign of the Lion (*From Hills and the Sea*), On High Places, On the Approach of Western England, *and* On London and the Houses in it. (*These last three from* On Everything.) *Of this triad the essayist declares "I know nothing approaching it except the conclusion of Pater's essay on Charles Lamb." Greater praise than this hath no man to bestow and surely but few writing men of any day or generation have had such praise bestowed upon them. One other thing Mr. Payne includes in his list of high and holy gifts to us, viz.,* The

Four Men: a Farrago (1912) *so called by its author; a book that, speaking for myself as well as for others whom I happen to know have read it, is a perfect flowering writ in speech and song. I find it difficult to give a perfectly sane account of this book. Once to read it is to place yourself in the power of Prospero. You enter an enchanted country meeting its true citizens who will remain with you in humour and in pathos and in all the wonderful things that go to make up a journey of divine adventure. Take as example this little Drinking Song of Duke William:*

"Duke William was a wench's son,
His grandfer was a tanner!
He drank his cider from the tun,
Which is the Norman manner:
His throne was made of oak and gold,
His bow-shaft of the yew—
That is the way the tale is told,
I doubt if it be true!

"But what care I for him?
My tankard is full to the brim,
And I'll sing Elizabeth, Dorothy,
Margaret, Mary, Dorinda, Persephone,
Miriam,
Pegotty taut and trim."

And I must quote, at least, the concluding stanza of another lyric:

"May all good fellows that here agree
Drink Audit Ale in heaven with me,

And may all my enemies go to hell!
Noel! Noel! Noel! Noel!
May all my enemies go to hell!
Noel! Noel!"

I shall conclude with saying that when the singing soul of our author is at its height nothing I have read elsewhere compares with his infinite gusto. The book draws to an end with a very perfect poem in which he believes

"The passer-by shall hear me still,
A boy that sings on Duncton Hill."

Then saith he "Full of these thoughts and greatly relieved by their metrical expression, I went, through the gathering darkness, southward across the Downs to my home." And so we come upon finis.

Having said but a tithe of what I would wish to say I leave the three essays chosen to speak for themselves. The last and least of my remarks are to this effect: that they suit the closing pages of The Bibelot *better than anything else I know and to my mind are the perfection of style and manner. Treasures that neither moth nor rust may corrupt nor, with the exception of myself, literary cracksmen break through and steal!*

FOR DECEMBER:
XVII WOODCUT DESIGNS
BY WILLIAM BLAKE.

THREE ESSAYS
By HILAIRE BELLOC.
I. ON SACRAMENTAL THINGS
II. ON REST
III. ON COMING TO AN END.

FILLE-LA-HAINE.

Death went into the steeple to ring,
And he pulled the rope and he tolled a knell.
Fille-la-Haine, how well you sing!
Why are they ringing the Passing Bell?
Death went into the steeple to ring;
Fille-la-Haine, how well you sing!

Death went down the stream in a boat,
Down the river of Seine went he;
Fille-la-Haine had a pain in her throat,
Fille-la-Haine was nothing to me.
Death went down the stream in a boat;
Fille-la-Haine had a pain in her throat.

Death went down the hill in a cart
(*I have forgotten her lips and her laughter*).
Fille-la-Haine was my sweetheart
(*And all the village was following after*).
Death went up the hill in a cart.
Fille-la-Haine was my sweetheart.

H. BELLOC.

How widely read Mr. Belloc's books may be I do not know, but there is no doubt that on those who do read them they exert a very powerful influence; and the secret of this influence lies, more than in anything else, in their style. Now style is something far more than the possession of a rich vocabulary or a keen ear for rhythm and melody; it is primarily an intellectual quality. The first requisite of good style is that the writer should have a clear vision of his subject, and firmly grasp the logical interrelation of its parts. It is on this basis that the admirable styles of Macaulay, Huxley, and Mill are built. When to this is added a keen perception of the emotional color of words, you get the really great styles of Newman and Ruskin. Without putting Mr. Belloc on a level with either of the latter, I venture to maintain that he combines in a higher degree than any writer of the day these two fundamental elements of distinction in style.

BURNELL PAYNE.

I.

ON SACRAMENTAL THINGS.

IT is good for a man's soul to sit down in the silence by himself and to think of those things which happen by some accident to be in communion with the whole world. If he has not the faculty of remembering these things in their order and of calling them up one after another in his mind, then let him write them down as they come to him upon a piece of paper. They will comfort him; they will prove a sort of solace against the expectation of the end. To consider such things is a sacramental occupation. And yet the more I think of them the less I can quite understand in what elements their power consists.

A woman smiling at a little child, not knowing that others see her, and holding out her hands towards it, and in one of her hands flowers; an old man, lean and active, with an eager face, walking at dusk upon a warm and windy evening westward towards a clear sunset below dark and flying clouds; a group of soldiers, seen suddenly in manœuvres, each man intent upon his business, all working at the wonderful trade, taking their

places with exactitude and order and yet with elasticity; a deep, strong tide running back to the sea, going noiselessly and flat and black and smooth, and heavy with purpose under an old wall; the sea smell of a Channel seaport town; a ship coming up at one out of the whole sea when one is in a little boat and is waiting for her, coming up at one with her great sails merry and every one doing its work, with the life of the wind in her, and a balance, rhythm, and give in all that she does which marries her to the sea — whether it be a fore and aft rig and one sees only great lines of the white, or a square rig and one sees what is commonly and well called a leaning tower of canvas, or that primal rig, the triangular sail, that cuts through the airs of the world and clove a way for the first adventures, whatever its rig, a ship so approaching an awaiting boat from which we watch her is one of the things I mean.

I would that the taste of my time permitted a lengthy list of such things: they are pleasant to remember! They do so nourish the mind! A glance of sudden comprehension mixed with mercy and humour from the face of a lover or a friend; the noise of wheels

when the guns are going by; the clatter-clank-clank of the pieces and the shouted halt at the head of the column; the noise of many horses, the metallic but united and harmonious clamour of all those ironed hoofs, rapidly occupying the highway; chief and most persistent memory, a great hill when the morning strikes it and one sees it up before one round the turning of a rock after the long passes and despairs of the night.

When a man has journeyed and journeyed through those hours in which there is no colour or shape, all along the little hours that were made for sleep and when, therefore, the waking soul is bewildered or despairs, the morning is always a resurrection — but especially when it reveals a height in the sky.

This last picture I would particularly cherish, so great a consolation is it, and so permanent a grace does it lend later to the burdened mind of a man.

For when a man looks back upon his many journeys — so many rivers crossed, and more than one of them forded in peril; so many swinging mountain roads, so many difficult steeps and such long wastes of plains — of

all the pictures that impress themselves by the art or kindness of whatever god presides over the success of journeys, no picture more remains than that picture of a great hill when the day first strikes it after the long burden of the night.

Whatever reasons a man may have for occupying the darkness with his travel and his weariness, those reasons must be out of the ordinary and must go with some bad strain upon the mind. Perhaps one undertook the march from an evil necessity under the coercion of other men, or perhaps in terror, hoping that the darkness might hide one, or perhaps for cool, dreading the unnatural heat of noon in a desert land; perhaps haste, which is in itself so wearying a thing, compelled one, or perhaps anxiety. Or perhaps, most dreadful of all, one hurried through the night afoot because one feared what otherwise the night would bring, a night empty of sleep and a night whose dreams were waking dreams and evil.

But whatever prompts the adventure or the necessity, when the long burden has been borne, and when the turn of the hours has come; when the stars have grown paler;

when colour creeps back greyly and uncertainly to the earth, first into the greens of the high pastures, then here and there upon a rock or a pool with reeds, while all the air, still cold, is full of the scent of morning; while one notices the imperceptible disappearance of the severities of Heaven until at last only the morning star hangs splendid; when in the end of that miracle the landscape is fully revealed, and one finds into what country one has come; then a great hill before one, losing the forests upwards into rock and steep meadow upon its sides, and towering at last into the peaks and crests of the inaccessible places, gives a soul to the new land. . . . The sun, in a single moment and with the immediate summons of a trumpet-call, strikes the spear-head of the high places, and at once the valley, though still in shadow, is transfigured, and with the daylight all manner of things have come back to the world.

Hope is the word which gathers the origins of those things together, and hope is the seed of what they mean, but that new light and its new quality is more than hope. Livelihood is come back with the sunrise, and

the fixed certitude of the soul; number and measure and comprehension have returned, and a just appreciation of all reality is the gift of the new day. Glory (which, if men would only know it, lies behind all true certitude) illumines and enlivens the seen world, and the living light makes of the true things now revealed something more than truth absolute; they appear as truth acting and creative.

This first shaft of the sun is to that hill and valley what a word is to a thought. It is to that hill and valley what verse is to the common story told; it is to that hill and valley what music is to verse. And there lies behind it, one is very sure, an infinite progress of such exaltations, so that one begins to understand, as the pure light shines and grows and as the limit of shadow descends the vast shoulder of the steep, what has been meant by those great phrases which still lead on, still comfort, and still make darkly wise, the uncomforted wondering of mankind. Such is the famous phrase: "Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man what things God has prepared for those that serve Him."

So much, then, is conveyed by a hill-top at sunrise when it comes upon the traveller or the soldier after the long march of a night, the bending of the shoulders, and the emptiness of the dark.

Many other things put one into communion with the whole world.

Who does not remember coming over a lifting road to a place where the ridge is topped, and where, upon the further side, a broad landscape, novel or endeared by memory (for either is a good thing), bursts upon the seized imagination as a wave from the open sea, swelling up an inland creek, breaks and bursts upon the rocks of the shore? There is a place where a man passes from the main valley of the Rhone over into the valley of the Isère, and where the Grésivandan so suddenly comes upon him. Two gates of limestone rock, high as the first shoulders of the mountains, lead into the valley which they guard; it is a province of itself, a level floor of thirty miles, nourished by one river, and walled in up to the clouds on either side.

Or, again, in the champagne country, moving between great blocks of wood in

the Forest of Rheims and always going upward as the ride leads him, a man comes to a point whence he suddenly sees all that vast plain of the invasions stretching out to where, very far off against the horizon, two days away, twin summits mark the whole site sharply with a limit as a frame marks a picture or a punctuation a phrase.

There is another place more dear to me, but which I doubt whether any other but a native of that place can know. After passing through the plough lands of an empty plateau, a traveller breaks through a little fringe of chestnut hedge and perceives at once before him the wealthiest and the most historical of European things, the chief of the great capitals of Christendom and the arena in which is now debated (and has been for how long!) the Faith, the chief problem of this world.

Apart from landscape other things belong to this contemplation: Notes of music, and, stronger even than repeated and simple notes of music, a subtle scent and its association, a familiar printed page. Perhaps the test of these sacramental things is their power to revive the past.

There is a story translated into the noblest of English writing by Dasent. It is to be found in his "Tales from the Norse." It is called the Story of the Master Maid.

A man had found in his youth a woman on the Norwegian hills: this woman was faëry, and there was a spell upon her. But he won her out of it in various ways, and they crossed the sea together, and he would bring her to his father's house, but his father was a King. As they went over-sea together alone, he said and swore to her that he would never forget how they had met and loved each other without warning, but by an act of God, upon the Dovrefjeld. Come near his father's house, the ordinary influences of the ordinary day touched him; he bade her enter a hut and wait a moment until he had warned his father of so strange a marriage; she, however, gazing into his eyes, and knowing how the divine may be transformed into the earthly, quite as surely as the earthly into the divine, makes him promise that he will not eat human food. He sits at his father's table, still steeped in her and in the seas. He forgets his vow and eats human food, and at once he forgets.

Then follows much for which I have not space, but the woman in the hut by her magic causes herself to be at last sent for to the father's palace. The young man sees her, and is only slightly troubled as by a memory which he cannot grasp. They talk together as strangers; but looking out of the window by accident the King's son sees a bird and its mate; he points them out to the woman, and she says suddenly: "So was it with you and me high up upon the Dovrefjeld." Then he remembers all.

Now that story is a symbol, and tells the truth. We see some one thing in this world, and suddenly it becomes particular and sacramental; a woman and a child, a man at evening, a troop of soldiers; we hear notes of music, we smell the smell that went with a passed time, or we discover after the long night a shaft of light upon the tops of the hills at morning: there is a resurrection, and we are refreshed and renewed.

But why all these things are so neither I nor any other man can tell.

II.

ON REST.

THERE was a priest once who preached a sermon to the text of "Abba, Father." On that text one might preach anything, but the matter that he chose was "Rest." He was not yet in middle age, and those who heard him were not yet even young. They could not understand at all the moment of his ardent speech, and even the older men, seeing him to be but in the central part of life, wondered that he should speak so. His eyes were illuminated by the vision of something distant; his heart was not ill at ease, but, as it were, fixedly expectant, and he preached from his little pulpit in that little chapel of the Downs, with rising and deeper powers of the voice, so that he shook the air; yet all this energy was but the praise or the demand for the surcease of energy, and all this sound was but the demand for silence.

It is a thing, I say, incomprehensible to the young, but gradually comprehended as the years go droning by, that in all things (and in proportion to the intensity of the life of each) there comes this appetite for dissolution and for repose: I do not mean

that repose beyond which further effort is demanded, but something final and supreme.

This priest, a year or so after he had appealed with his sermon before that little country audience in the emptiness of the Downs, died. He had that which he desired; Rest. But what is it? What is the nature of this thing?

Note you how great soldiers, when their long campaigns are done, are indifferent to further wars, and look largely upon the nature of fighting men, their objects, their failures, their victories, their rallying, their momentary cheers. Not that they grow indifferent to that great trade which is the chief business of a State, the defence or the extension of the common weal; but that after so much expense of all the senses our God gave them, a sort of charity and justice fills their minds. I have often remarked how men who had most lost and won, even in arms, would turn the leisured part of their lives to the study of the details of struggle, and seemed equally content to be describing the noble fortunes of an army, whether it were upon the crest of advancing victory, or in the agony of a surrender. This was because the writers had

found Rest. And throughout the history of Letters — of Civilisation, and of contemporary friends, one may say that in proportion to the largeness of their action is this largeness and security of vision at the end.

Now, note another thing: that, when we speak of an end, by that very word we mean two things. For first we mean the cessation of Form, and perhaps of Idea; but also we mean a goal, or object, to which the Form and the Idea perpetually tended, without which they would have had neither meaning nor existence, and in which they were at last fulfilled. Aristotle could give no summing up but this to all his philosophy, that there was a nature, not only of all, but of each, and that the end determined what that nature might be; which is also what we Christians mean when we say that God made the world; and great Rabelais, when his great books were ending, could but conclude that all things tended to their end. Tennyson also, before he died, having written for so many years a poetry which one must be excused in believing considerable, felt, as how many have felt it, the thrumming of the ebb tide when the sea calls back the

feudal allegiance of the rivers. I know it upon Arun bar. The Flood, when the sea heaves up and pours itself into the inland channels, bears itself creatively, and is like the manhood of a man — first tentative, then gathering itself for action, then sweeping suddenly at the charge. It carries with it the wind from the open horizon, it determines suddenly, it spurs, and sweeps, and is victorious; the current races; the harbour is immediately full.

But the ebb tide is of another kind. With a long, slow power, whose motive is at once downward steadily towards its authority and its obedience and desire, it pushes as with shoulders, home; and for many hours the stream goes darkly, swiftly, and steadily. It is intent, direct, and level. It is a thing for evenings, and it is under an evening when there is little wind, that you may best observe the symbol thus presented by material things. For everything in nature has in it something sacramental, teaching the soul of man; and nothing more possesses that high quality than the motion of a river when it meets the sea. The water at last hangs dully, the work is done; and those who have

permitted the lesson to instruct their minds are aware of consummation.

Men living in cities have often wondered how it was that the men in the open who knew horses and the earth or ships and the salt water risk so much — and for what reward? It is an error in the very question they ask, rather than in the logical puzzle they approach, which falsifies their wonder. There is no reward. To die in battle, to break one's neck at a hedge, to sink or to be swamped are not rewards. But action demands an end; there is a fruit to things; and everything we do (here at least, and within the bonds of time) may not exceed the little limits of a nature which it neither made nor acquired for itself, but was granted.

Some say that old men fear death. It is the theme of the debased and the vulgar. It is not true. Those who have imperfectly served are ready enough; those who have served more perfectly are glad — as though there stood before them a natural transition and a condition of their being.

So it says in a book "all good endings are but shining transitions." And, again, there is a sonnet which says:

We will not whisper : we have found the place
  Of silence and the ancient halls of sleep,
  And that which breathes alone throughout the deep
The end and the beginning ; and the face
Between the level brows of whose blind eyes
  Lie plenary contentment, full surcease
  Of violence, and the ultimate great peace
Wherein we lose our human lullabies.

Look up and tell the immeasurable height
  Between the vault of the world and your dear head ;
That 's Death, my little sister, and the Night
  That was our Mother beckons us to bed :
Where large oblivion in her house is laid
For us tired children now our games are played.

Indeed, one might quote the poets (who are the teachers of mankind) indefinitely in this regard. They are all agreed. What did Sleep and Death to the body of Sarpedon? They took it home. And every one who dies in all the Epics is better for the dying. Some complain of it afterwards I will admit; but they are hard to please. Roland took it as the end of battle; and there was a Scandinavian fellow caught on the north-east coast, I think, who in dying thanked God for all the joy he had had in his life — as you may have heard before. And St. Anthony of Assisi (not of Padua) said, "Welcome,

little sister Death!" as was his way. And one who stands right up above most men who write or speak said it was the only port after the tide-streams and bar-handling of this journey.

So it is; let us be off to the hills. The silence and the immensity that inhabit them are the simulacra of such things.

III.

ON COMING TO AN END.

Of all the simple actions in the world! Of all the simple actions in the world! One would think it could be done with less effort than the heaving of a sigh. . . . Well — then, one would be wrong.

There is no case of Coming to an End but has about it something of an effort and a jerk, as though Nature abhorred it, and though it be true that some achieve a quiet and a perfect end to one thing or another (as, for instance, to Life), yet this achievement is not arrived at save through the utmost toil, and consequent upon the most persevering and exquisite art.

Now you can say that this may be true of sentient things but not of things inanimate. It is true even of things inanimate.

Look down some straight railway line for a vanishing point to the perspective: you will never find it. Or try to mark the moment when a small target becomes invisible. There is no gradation; a moment it was there, and you missed it — possibly because the Authorities were not going in

for journalism that day, and had not chosen a dead calm with the light full on the canvas. A moment it was there and then, as you steamed on, it was gone. The same is true of a lark in the air. You see it and then you do not see it, you only hear its song. And the same is true of that song: you hear it and then suddenly you do not hear it. It is true of a human voice, which is familiar in your ear, living and inhabiting the rooms of your house. There comes a day when it ceases altogether — and how positive, how definite and hard is that Coming to an End.

It does not leave an echo behind it, but a sharp edge of emptiness, and very often as one sits beside the fire the memory of that voice suddenly returning gives to the silence about one a personal force, as it were, of obsession and of control. So much happens when even one of all our million voices Comes to an End.

It is necessary, it is august and it is reasonable that the great story of our lives also should be accomplished and should reach a term: and yet there is something in that hidden duality of ours which makes the

prospect of so natural a conclusion terrible, and it is the better judgment of mankind and the mature conclusion of civilisations in their age that there is not only a conclusion here but something of an adventure also. It may be so.

Those who solace mankind and are the principal benefactors of it, I mean the poets and the musicians, have attempted always to ease the prospect of Coming to an End, whether it were the Coming to an End of the things we love or of that daily habit and conversation which is our life and is the atmosphere wherein we loved them. Indeed this is a clear test whereby you may distinguish the great artists from the mean hucksters and charlatans, that the first approach and reveal what is dreadful with calm and, as it were, with a purpose to use it for good while the vulgar catchpenny fellows must liven up their bad dishes as with a cheap sauce of the horrible, caring nothing, so that their shrieks sell, whether we are the better for them or no.

The great poets, I say, bring us easily or grandly to the gate: as in that *Ode to a Nightingale* where it is thought good (in an

immortal phrase) to pass painlessly at midnight, or, in the glorious line which Ronsard uses, like a salute with the sword, hailing "la profitable mort."

The noblest or the most perfect of English elegies leaves, as a sort of savour after the reading of it, no terror at all nor even too much regret, but the landscape of England at evening, when the smoke of the cottages mixes with autumn vapours among the elms; and even that gloomy modern *Ode to the West Wind*, unfinished and touched with despair, though it will speak of —

> . . . . that outer place forlorn
> Which, like an infinite grey sea, surrounds
> With everlasting calm the land of human sounds;

yet also returns to the sacramental earth of one's childhood where it says:

> For now the Night completed tells her tale
> Of rest and dissolution: gathering round
> Her mist in such persuasion that the ground
> Of Home consents to falter and grow pale.
> And the stars are put out and the trees fail.
> Nor anything remains but that which drones
> Enormous through the dark. . . .

And again, in another place, where it prays that one may at the last be fed with beauty —

> . . . . as the flowers are fed
> That fill their falling-time with generous breath:
> Let me attain a natural end of death,
> And on the mighty breast, as on a bed,
> Lay decently at last a drowsy head,
> Content to lapse in somnolence and fade
> In dreaming once again the dream of all things made.

The most careful philosophy, the most heavenly music, the best choice of poetic or prosaic phrase prepare men properly for man's perpetual loss of this and of that, and introduce us proudly to the similar and greater business of departure from them all, from whatever of them all remains at the close.

To be introduced, to be prepared, to be armoured, all these are excellent things, but there is a question no foresight can answer nor any comprehension resolve. It is right to gather upon that question the varied affections or perceptions of varying men.

I knew a man once in the Tourdenoise, a gloomy man, but very rich, who cared little for the things he knew. This man took no

pleasure in his fruitful orchards and his carefully ploughed fields and his harvests. He took pleasure in pine trees; he was a man of groves and of the dark. For him that things should come to an end was but part of an universal rhythm; a part pleasing to the general harmony, and making in the music of the world about him a solemn and, oh, a conclusive chord. This man would study the sky at night and take from it a larger and a larger draught of infinitude, finding in this exercise not a mere satisfaction, but an object and goal for the mind; when he had so wandered for a while under the night he seemed, for the moment, to have reached the object of his being.

And I knew another man in the Weald who worked with his hands, and was always kind, and knew his trade well; he smiled when he talked of scythes, and he could thatch. He could fish also, and he knew about grafting, and about the seasons of plants, and birds, and the way of seed. He had a face full of weather, he fatigued his body, he watched his land. He would not talk much of mysteries, he would rather hum songs. He loved new friends and old.

He had lived with one wife for fifty years, and he had five children, who were a policeman, a schoolmistress, a son at home, and two who were sailors. This man said that what a man did and the life in which he did it was like the farmwork upon a summer's day. He said one works a little and rests, and works a little again, and one drinks, and there is a perpetual talk with those about one. Then (he would say) the shadows lengthen at evening, the wind falls, the birds get back home. And as for ourselves, we are sleepy before it is dark.

Then also I knew a third man who lived in a town and was clerical and did no work, for he had money of his own. This man said that all we do and the time in which we do it is rather a night than a day. He said that when we came to an end we vanished, we and our works, but that we vanished into a broadening light.

Which of these three knew best the nature of man and of his works, and which knew best of what nature was the end?

* * * * * * *

Why so glum, my Lad, or my Lass (as the case may be), why so heavy at heart? Did

you not know that you also must Come to an End?

Why, that woman of Etaples who sold such Southern wine for the dissipation of the Picardian Mist, her time is over and gone and the wine has been drunk long ago and the singers in her house have departed, and the wind of the sea moans in and fills their hall. The Lords who died in Roncesvalles have been dead these thousand years and more, and the loud song about them grew very faint and dwindled and is silent now: there is nothing at all remains.

It is certain that the hills decay and that rivers as the dusty years proceed run feebly and lose themselves at last in desert sands; and in its æons the very firmament grows old. But evil also is perishable and bad men meet their judge. Be comforted.

Now of all endings, of all Comings to an End none is so hesitating as the ending of a book which the Publisher will have so long and the writer so short: and the Public (God Bless the Public) will have whatever it is given.

Books, however much their lingering, books also must Come to an End. It is

abhorrent to their nature as to the life of man. They must be sharply cut off. Let it be done at once and fixed as by a spell and the power of a Word; the word FINIS.

The Bibelot

THE *first number of* The Bibelot *opened with Lyrics by William Blake chosen from the* Poetical Sketches (*1783*), Songs of Innocence (*1789*), *and* Songs of Experience (*1794*). *In this final number I now set forth the ever wonderful Designs which were made to accompany Thornton's* Virgil *where they first appeared in the third edition* (*1821*). *From that time until the edition I published in 1899 these Seventeen Woodcuts remained as a series* introuvable *in that curious repository of classical shreds and patches. The second attempt to give them publicity was in The Unicorn Press edition containing an Introduction by Mr. Laurence Binyon* (*1902*). *The third reproduction is next seen in the Series of enlarged facsimiles done by Mr. Frederick H. Evans, and limited to twenty-five copies, London* (*1912*). *All of these are now dispersed and, as I hope, have found loving acceptance with the saving remnant who alone appreciates their matchless beauty. The history of these Designs has been told beginning with Gilchrist* (*1863*) *and ending with Mr. A. G. B. Russell's* Engravings by William

Blake (*1912*). *In Mr. Arthur Symons'* William Blake (*1907*) *students will find an indispensable aid in the study of Blake at first hand and from the original documents. What Mr. Symons has himself said concerning these Woodcuts is as follows:*

"*It was in 1820, the year in which Blake began his vast picture of the 'Last Judgment,' only finished in the year of his death, that he did the seventeen woodcuts to Thornton's* Virgil, *certainly one of his greatest, his most wholly successful achievements. The book was for boys' schools, and we find Blake returning without an effort to the childlike mood of the* Songs of Innocence and Experience. *The woodcuts have all the natural joy of those early designs, an equal simplicity, but with what added depth, what richness, what passionate strength! Blake was now engraving on wood for the first time, and he had to invent his own way of working. Just what he did has never been better defined than in an article which appeared in the* Athenæum *of January 21, 1843, one of the very few intelligent references to Blake which can be found in print between the time of his death and the date of Gilchrist's* Life. '*We hold it impossible,' says the writer, 'to get a genuine work of art, unless it come pure and unadulter-*

ated from the mind that conceived it. . . . Still more strongly is the author's meaning marked in the few wood-engravings which that wonderful man Blake cut himself for an edition of Thornton's Pastorals of Virgil. *In token of our faith in the principle here announced, we have obtained the loan of one of Blake's original blocks, from Mr. Linnell, who possesses the whole series, to print, as an illustration of our argument, that, amid all drawbacks, there exists a power in the work of the man of genius, which no one but himself can utter fully. Side by side we have printed a copy of an engraver's improved version of the same subject. When Blake had produced his cuts, which were, however, printed with an apology, a shout of derision was raised by the wood-engravers. 'This will never do!' said they; 'we will show what it ought to be' — that is, what the public taste would like — and they produced the above amendment! The engravers were quite right in their estimate of public taste; and we dare say many will agree with them even now: yet, to our minds, Blake's rude work, utterly without pretension, too, as an engraving — the merest attempt of a fresh apprentice — is a work of genius; whilst the latter is but a piece of smooth, tame mechanism."*

The Lyrics that I gave at the beginning of the Bibelot's *career were of Blake's youth and early manhood. The Designs to* Virgil *are at the end almost of his life. I include with the Binyon Introduction the text of Philips' Imitation of the First Eclogue: the Designs themselves are reproduced from the set of proofs once in my possession.*

Looking back over these twenty years I can perceive I builded better than I knew, and, with the ideal before me, have proved not unfaithful to a self-imposed task. I began with Blake and end with Blake. In doing this one might recall what has been noted by scholiasts long ago. They find in the old Roman singer of field and fold that the Fourth Georgic, ending with "Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi" *is a harking back with poignant implication to the first line of Virgil's First Eclogue. At the close of my editorial labors I feel it only fitting to say the like implication is found in this quatrain from Blake:*

I give you the end of a golden string;
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall.

XVII Woodcut Designs to Thornton's Virgil By William Blake.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

(To Frederick Shields, on his sketch of Blake's work-room and death-room, 3, Fountain Court, Strand.)

This is the place. Even here the dauntless soul,
The unflinching hand, wrought on; till in that nook,
As on that very bed, his life partook
New birth, and passed. Yon river's dusky shoal,
Whereto the close-built coiling lanes unroll,
Faced his work-window, whence his eyes would stare,
Thought-wandering, unto nought that met them there,
But to the unfettered irreversible goal.

This cupboard, Holy of Holies, held the cloud
Of his soul writ and limned; this other one,
His true wife's charge, full oft to their abode
Yielded for daily bread the martyr's stone,
Ere yet their food might be that Bread alone,
The words now home-speech of the mouth of God.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

WHATEVER interest attaches to the various biographies and critical estimates of Blake it is certain that the following works are of the greatest importance :

1. *Life of William Blake* by Alexander Gilchrist, 2 vols., octavo, London, (Macmillan,) 1863. New and enlarged edition, 1880.

2. *William Blake : A critical Essay* by A. C. Swinburne. Octavo, London, 1868. New edition, crown octavo, London, 1906.

3. *The Works of William Blake : Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical*, edited by E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats. Royal quarto, 3 vols., London, 1893.

4. *The Letters of William Blake Together with a Life* by Frederick Tatham, edited by A. G. B. Russell. Octavo, London, 1909.

5. *The Engravings of William Blake* by A. G. B. Russell. Quarto, London and Boston, 1912.

6. *William Blake* by Arthur Symons. Octavo, London, 1907.

7. *The Real Blake : A Portrait Biography* by E. J. Ellis. Octavo, London, 1907.

8. *The Poetical Works of William Blake.* A new and verbatim text from the manuscript engraved and letterpress originals, edited by John Sampson. Octavo, Oxford, 1905.

9. The Same with additions and Bibliographical Introduction. Crown octavo, Oxford, 1913.

INTRODUCTION.

THE name of William Blake has proved a magnet to violent opinions: he has been more praised and blamed than understood. His gift was complex, and his productions combined elements that are very rarely combined; hence confusions are to be found underlying his work, which have been reflected in the minds of his critics. In the present series we are only concerned with him as an artist.

Blake says somewhere: "The lavish praise I have received from all quarters, for invention and drawing, has generally been accompanied by this: 'He can conceive, but he cannot execute.' This absurd assertion has done, and may still do, me the greatest mischief." In spite of the artist's protest, this continues to be the current criticism on Blake's work. And yet the truth lies rather on the other side. It is not so much in his execution as in the failure to mature his conceptions that his defect is to be found. Those who disparage the technical side of art find no countenance from Blake, who maintained that "Ideas cannot be given but in their minutely appropriate words, nor can

a design be made without its minutely appropriate execution." Certainly Blake cannot be accused of falling short of his own conceptions by want of craftsmanship.

Blake is at his best in his original engravings. The *Inventions to the Book of Job* are justly his most prized and famous work, and these it is proposed to reproduce in a later volume of this series. But the woodcuts, which form the present number, represent the artist in Blake with less alloy even than the *Job*. They are the only woodcuts he ever produced, and they were produced late in life. Blake was sixty-three, when, in 1820, he was commissioned by Dr. R. J. Thornton to design and engrave some small illustrations for a new edition of the doctor's *School Virgil*. This book contained the Eclogues in Latin, with English imitations in verse taken from the works of Pope, Shenstone, and others. The English imitation of the First Eclogue is by Ambrose Philips; and it was this poem of Philips which Blake was called in to illustrate. He made twenty sepia drawings, of which he engraved seventeen. Gilchrist tells us of the consternation of the publishers on receiving them. "This

man," they cried, "must do no more"; and the blocks would all have been re-cut by other hands had not some timely words of praise from Lawrence, James Ward, and other artists revived Dr. Thornton's dashed faith in Blake. It was too late, however, to save the three remaining designs; they had been already cut by some other hand. These are illustrations to the comparisons in the last speech of Colinet in Philips' *Pastoral;* birds flying over a cornfield, ships on the ocean, and a winding river. We can tell from these what we should have lost if the same hand had been called in to engrave the other seventeen designs. The difference is enormous; for Blake's drawings were not like the drawings made by the great German draughtsmen of Durer's time, nor like our English draughtsmen of the 'sixties, drawings which a skilled cutter could reproduce in facsimile; they were drawings in which the tint had to be translated into line. The professional workman, in engraving these three designs, absolutely destroyed the balance of the compositions and the character of the draughtsmanship. Blake had been trained from boyhood as a copper engraver,

and was a practised and skilful wielder of the burin; but he was entirely new to work on the boxwood. Till the end of the eighteenth century woodcuts had been produced with a knife and a plank of pearwood; but the new method very quickly ousted the old; and by 1820, chiefly through the Bewicks and their school, wood-engraving in the modern sense had begun to come into its great popularity. Blake brought to the new material a mastery of his tool, free from that retarding influence of old tradition which hampered him throughout as a copper-engraver, so that he only half discovered his true manner late in life. He had, moreover, the priceless advantage of being at once designer and engraver. Some of the early wood-engravers, like the Bewicks, did original work; but very soon the art degenerated into the mechanically skilful reproduction of drawings supplied by illustrators, a tradition which no artist thought of breaking, after Blake's and Calvert's example, till William Morris took up the graver under the inspiration of Rossetti.

Blake's conceptions in these illustrations did not take their final form in the drawings;

they were only fully realised on the block itself. Hence they have the character of visions called up as if by moonlight out of the darkened surface of the wood, and seem to have no existence apart from it. Most fortunate when least concerned to mature his conceptions, Blake seems to have worked in an unusually happy mood, striking out his ideas with a bold and swift suggestiveness, and that spontaneous sweet eloquence which is the charm of his best songs. The vital features of landscape grandeur, rural peace, even terror, are racily sketched, with a sense of the primeval and elemental in man and nature, seized and expressed as only whole-hearted directness can seize them and express them.

The imaginative potency of these designs is realised if we take a piece of blank paper, of the size of the blocks. How small it appears when compared with the print! One would not have imagined that the design could be contained in it.

That Blake stopped short where he did, improvising rather than elaborating, is the secret of the charm of these woodcuts. For his temperament unfitted him for success in

carrying his work farther; his want was not lack of skill, but lack of patience. Everywhere in his work we trace the ardent desire to find in objects, which a purer artist would have studied primarily for their beauty, symbols for ideas; and he is often so impetuous in his search as to forget not only the beauty but the natural significance of the objects he represents. Once found, the symbols are used as letters of an alphabet wherewith to spell sentences imaginatively prophetic of an unknown beyond. Thus the same attitudes of the human form recur again and again in his work. When the execution is slight and rapid, as in these woodcuts, we are brought immediately face to face with the glowing thoughts of the artist, and his ardour and energy delight us; but when the execution is elaborate we are conscious of something lost, or rather of the alloy introduced by Blake's effort to give something like the elaborate realisation of other artists to what he himself chiefly valued as a sort of hieroglyph.

Beside their aboriginal and intuitive expressiveness, these woodcuts possess another source of charm, — in the poetical and pic-

torial richness of their subject matter, which offered no temptation to allegory, yet appealed to the artist's faith and native delight in Arcadian simplicity. The motives were simple and highly congenial, and in realising them Blake seems to have drawn on the happy and serene memories of his stay at Felpham, on the Sussex coast, the only years of his life not spent in London, and among the happiest he ever spent. Of all his productions these seem the most satisfying; and in the history of wood-engraving they are numbered among the precious and far too rare examples of work in which the graving tool has been the direct instrument of an artist's thought, and the woodblock the recipient of his immediate inspiration.

LAURENCE BINYON.

XVII WOODCUT DESIGNS

By WILLIAM BLAKE

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

IX

X

XI

XII

XIII

XIV

XV

XVI

XVII

THENOT AND COLINET.[1]

An Eclogue.

THENOT, COLINET.

THENOT.

Is it not *Colinet* I lonesome see,
Leaning with folded arms against the tree?
Or is it age of late bedims my sight?
'T is *Colinet*, indeed, in woeful plight.

Thy cloudy look why melting into tears,
Unseemly, now the sky so bright appears?
Why in this mournful manner art thou found,
Unthankful lad, when all things smile around?
Or hear'st not lark and linnet jointly sing,
Their notes blithe-warbling to salute the spring? (I)

COLINET.

Though blithe their notes, not so my wayward fate;
Nor lark wood sing, nor linnet, in my state.
Each creature, *Thenot*, to his task is born,
As they to mirth and musick, I to mourn.
Waking, at midnight, I my woes renew,
My tears oft' mingling with the falling dew. (II)

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[1] The numbers in parenthesis at verse endings indicate with sufficient clearness the relation of the *Designs* to the poem.

THENOT.

Small cause, I ween, has lusty youth to plain;
Or who may, then, the weight of eld sustain,
When every slackening nerve begins to fail,
And the load presseth as our days prevail?
Yet, though with years my body downward tend,
As trees beneath their fruit, in autumn, bend
Spite of my snowy head and icy veins,
My mind a chearful temper still retains:
And why should man, mishap what will, repine,
Sour every sweet, and mix with tears his wine?
But tell me then: it may relieve thy woe,
To let a friend thine inward ailment know. (III)

COLINET.

Idly 't will waste thee, *Thenot*, the whole day,
Should'st thou give ear to all my grief can say.
Thine ewes will wander; and the heedless lambs,
In loud complaints, require their absent dams. (IV)

THENOT.

See *Lightfoot;* he shall tend them close: and I,
'Tween whiles, across the plain will glance mine eye.

COLINET.

Where to begin I know not, where to end. (V)
Does there one smiling hour my youth attend?
Though few my days, as well my follies show,
Yet are those days all clouded o'er with woe:

No happy gleam of sunshine doth appear,
My lowering sky, and wintery months, to chear.
My piteous plight in yonder naked tree,
Which bears the thunder-scar, too plain I see:
Quite destitute it stands of shelter kind,
The mark of storms, and sport of every wind:
The riven trunk feels not th' approach of spring;
Nor birds among the leafless branches sing:
No more, beneath thy shade, shall shepherds throng
With jocund tale, or pipe, or pleasing song.
Ill-fated tree! and more ill-fated I!
From thee, from me, alike the shepherds fly. (VI)

THENOT.

Sure thou in hapless hour of time wast born,
When blighting mildews spoil the rising corn,
Or blasting winds o'er blossom'd hedge-rows pass,
To kill the promis'd fruits, and scorch the grass,
Or when the moon, by wizard charm'd, foreshows,
Blood-stain'd in foul eclipse, impending woes.
Untimely born, ill luck betides thee still. (VII)

COLINET.

And can there, *Thenot*, be a greater Ill?

THENOT.

Nor fox, nor wolf, nor rot among our sheep:
From these good shepherd's care his flock may keep:
Against ill luck, alas! all forecast fails;
Nor toil by day, nor watch by night, avails.

COLINET.

Ah me, the while! ah me, the luckless day!
Ah luckless lad! befits me more to say.
Unhappy hour! when fresh in youthful bud,
I left, *Sabrina* fair, thy silvery flood.
Ah, silly I! more silly than my sheep,
Which, on thy flowery banks, I wont to keep.
Sweet are thy banks! Oh, when shall I, once more,
With ravish'd eyes review thine amell'd shore?
When, in the crystal of thy water, scan
Each feature faded, and my colour wan?
When shall I see my hut, the small abode
Myself did raise, and cover o'er with sod?
Small though it be, a mean and humble cell,
Yet is there room for peace, and me, to dwell. (VIII)

THENOT.

And what enticement charm'd thee, far away,
From thy lov'd home, and led thy heart astray? (IX)

COLINET.

A lewd desire strange lands, and swains, to know:
Ah God! that ever I should covet woe.
With wandering feet unblest, and fond of fame,
I sought I know not what besides a name.

THENOT.

Or, sooth to say, did'st thou not hither rome
In search of gains more plenty than at home?

A rolling stone is, ever, bare of moss;
And, to their cost, green years old proverbs cross. (x)

COLINET.

Small need there was, in random search of gain,
To drive my pining flock athwart the plain,
To distant *Cam*. Fine gain at length, I trow,
To hoard up to myself such deal of woe!
My sheep quite spent, through travel and ill fare,
And, like their keeper, ragged grown and bare,
The damp, cold greensward, for my nightly bed,
And some slaunt willow's trunk to rest my head.
Hard is to bear of pinching cold the pain;
And hard is want to the unpracticed swain:
But neither want, nor pinching cold, is hard,
To blasting storms of calumny compar'd:
Unkind as hail it falls; the pelting shower
Destroys the tender herb, and budding flower. (xi)

THENOT.

Slander we shepherds count the vilest wrong:
And what wounds sorer than an evil tongue?

COLINET.

Untoward lads, the wanton imps of spite,
Make mock of all the ditties I endite.
In vain, O *Colinet*, thy pipe, so shrill,
Charms every vale, and gladdens every hill:

In vain thou seek'st the coverings of the grove,
In the cool shade to sing the pains of love:
Sing what thou wilt, ill-nature will prevail;
And every elf hath skill enough to rail:
But yet, though poor and artless be my vein,
Menalcas seems to like my simple strain:
And, while that He delighteth in my song,
Which to the good *Menalcas* doth belong,
Nor night, nor day, shall my rude musick cease;
I ask no more, so I *Menalcas* please. (XII)

THENOT.

Menalcas, lord of these fair, fertile, plains,
Preserves the sheep, and o'er the shepherds reigns:
For him our yearly wakes, and feasts, we hold,
And choose the fairest firstling from the fold:
He, good to all, who Good deserve, shall give
Thy flock to feed, and thee at ease to live,
Shall curb the malice of unbridled tongues,
And bounteously reward thy rural songs. (XIII)

COLINET.

First, then, shall lightsome birds forget to fly,
The briny ocean turn to pastures dry,
And every rapid river cease to flow,
'E're I unmindful of *Menalcas* grow.

This night thy care with me forget, and fold
Thy flock with mine, to ward th' injurious cold. (XIV)
New milk, and clouted cream, mild cheese and curd,
With some remaining fruit of last year's hoard,
Shall be our evening fare, and, for the night,
Sweet herbs and moss, which gentle sleep invite: (XV)
And now behold the sun's departing ray,
O'er yonder hill, the sign of ebbing day:
With songs the jovial hinds return from plow; (XVI)
And unyok'd heifers, loitering homeward, low. (XVII)

AMBROSE PHILIPS.

April, 1748.

THERE ends THE BIBELOT Volume Twenty. Printed by Smith & Sale for Thomas B. Mosher and published by him at XLV Exchange Street Portland Maine. MDCCCCXIV.

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